

A Space For New Voices In Cinema

E-Catalogue

Qumra 2020

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Qumra

**A Space for New
Voices in Cinema**

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Senior Coordinator

Introduction

In the best interest of the health and safety of local residents and international visitors, the Doha Film Institute (DFI) made the decision to cancel the 2020 edition of Qumra and its related activities to mitigate any potential risks associated with the current global COVID-19 outbreak. This decision was part of the Institute’s contribution to the responsible management and prevention of further spread of the virus in Qatar.

Over the past six years, Qumra has been a one-of-a-kind professional incubator crucial to the success of filmmakers from the Arab world and beyond. As part of the 2020 Qumra Masters programme, legendary French auteur Claire Denis, BAFTA and Academy Award-nominated cinematographer Phedon Papamichael, internationally celebrated director James Gray, Silver Lion-winning film director and screenwriter Jessica Hausner, and Oscar-winning sound designer Mark Mangini were all confirmed to participate in the annual event that has become a blueprint for global success in creative development and cultural collaboration.

The Qumra 2020 programme was set to commence on 20 March with 46 selected projects from 20 countries as part of DFI’s mission to accelerate the success of filmmakers from the region and beyond and prepare them to bring their projects to audiences around the world.

Qumra is an extremely important event for our community and participants, and the 46 selected projects remain a priority for DFI this year. To maintain the current momentum towards success for the projects, the Institute will proceed with an adapted online mentorship and support format to generate opportunities for the filmmakers through this period of new challenges. This abridged version of the Qumra catalogue highlights the 46 projects that will benefit from this innovative solution.

The Institute is extremely grateful to our Qumra Masters, filmmakers and industry participants for their ongoing passion and contribution to our commitment to reshape the global storytelling landscape and empower emerging voices to create cinema, to exercise creative expression, and to transform inspired stories into acclaimed masterpieces.

The evolution of storytelling has expanded the scope and expression of ideas and influence, and we hope this “Online Qumra” will be a successful extension of our ongoing passion and commitment to supporting emerging voices in global filmmaking.

Qumra Masters

Scheduled 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 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'.



Claire Denis

Claire Denis is a French film director and writer who is widely regarded as one of contemporary Europe's most distinctive auteurs. Her work has dealt with themes of colonial and post-colonial West Africa, as well as issues in modern France, and draws heavily from her own childhood memories of Cameroon. Denis's feature film directorial debut 'Chocolat' (1988), is a semi-autobiographical reflection on French colonialism in Africa that examines racial tension, forbidden desire and belonging—themes that would later define her as a filmmaker.

With films such as 'us Go Home' (1994), 'Nénette et Boni' (1996), 'Beau Travail' (1999), 'Trouble Every Day' (2001), and 'Vendredi Soir' (2002), she established a reputation as a filmmaker who is able to "reconcile the lyricism of French cinema with the impulse to capture the often harsh face of contemporary France". Denis went on to win widespread acclaim for '35 Rhums' (2009), a compelling portrayal of a father-daughter relationship in a mixed immigrant community. In 2018, she completed and released 'High Life', her first English-language feature film, with Robert Pattinson cast as the lead.

Ultimately, the films of Claire Denis ask us to examine the lines that divide us and to confront the Other. The intrusion of the body, of borders, of culture and of limits, asks both Denis's characters and her audience to come face to face with their differences. Wesley Morris, a cultural critic for the Times, has compared her work to a stew that's been cooking all week—a reduced and potent pleasure.



James Gray

James Gray is a world-renowned director, screenwriter and producer. He made his directorial debut in 1994 with 'Little Odessa', a widely acclaimed film which received the Critics Award at the Deauville Film Festival as well as the Silver Lion at the Venice Film Festival. Since then, he has made seven other features, four of which competed for the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. In 2000, Gray wrote and directed 'The Yards', his second feature and his first with Joaquin Phoenix, who would go on to become a frequent collaborator. The drama premiered in competition at the Cannes Film Festival.

Gray's New York crime drama 'We Own the Night' (2007) starred Mark Wahlberg, Joaquin Phoenix, Eva Mendes and Robert Duvall. The film received a César nomination in 2008 for Best Foreign Film and screened in competition at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival. His fourth feature, 'Two Lovers' (2008), received nominations at the Independent Spirit Awards for Best Director and Best Female Lead.

In 2013, 'The Immigrant', which starred Joaquin Phoenix, Marion Cotillard and Jeremy Renner, went on to garner numerous

awards including Best Actress (Marion Cotillard) and Best Cinematography (Darius Khondji) prizes from the New York Film Critics Circle. Gray's film 'The Lost City of Z' was based on the best-selling novel by David Grann and starred Charlie Hunnam, Sienna Miller, Robert Pattinson and Tom Holland. Gray first confirmed his plans to write and direct sci-fi space epic 'Ad Astra' during the 2016 Cannes Film Festival, and the visually compelling journey to the vast reaches of space, starring Brad Pitt was released to critical acclaim in 2019.

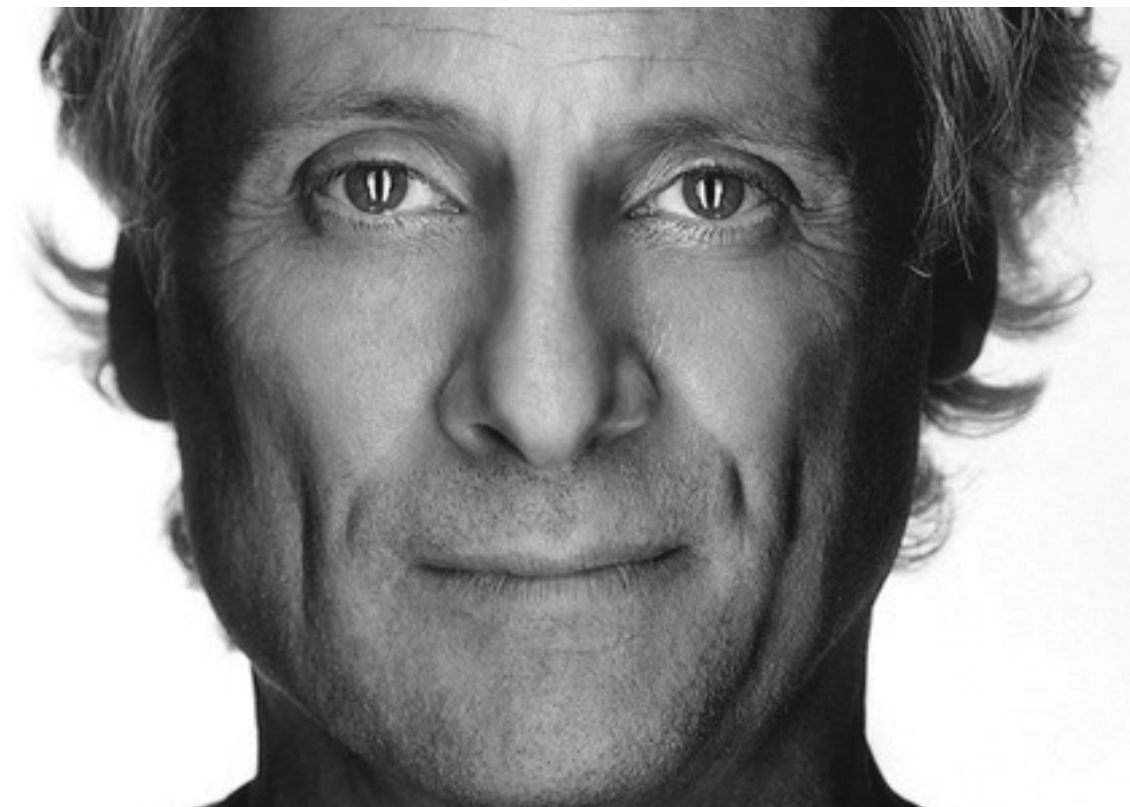


Jessica Hausner

Jessica Hausner is an Austrian film director and screenwriter. Hausner initially studied psychology and later trained as a director at the Vienna Film Academy. While studying, she made the short film 'Flora' (1996), which won the Léopard de Demain at the Locarno Festival. 'Inter-view', her graduation film, won the Prix du Jury of the Cinéfondation at the Cannes Film Festival in 1999.

She received international attention in 2001 when her first feature 'Lovely Rita', a portrait of a young girl who feels confined by family constraints, was screened in the Un Certain Regard section at the 2001 Cannes Film Festival. Just three years later she returned to Cannes with her thriller 'Hotel' (2004). Her next film 'Lourdes', a mysterious and brilliantly composed drama, had its premiere at Venice Film Festival 2009 in International Competition where it won the FIPRESCI Prize.

Her 2014 film 'Amour Fou', based on the tragic life of the German writer Henrich von Kleist, was selected to compete in the Un Certain Regard section at the 2014 Cannes Film Festival. She was appointed a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in 2017. Hausner's fifth and most recent film, 'Little Joe', is her first English-language feature. It was presented in the main competition at the 2019 Cannes Film Festival and garnered the acting award for lead actress Emily Beecham.



Mark Mangini

Mark Mangini is an Academy Award-winning, and five-time nominated sound designer known for films including 'Blade Runner 2049', 'Star Trek IV', 'The Fifth Element', 'Gremlins' and 'Raiders of the Lost Ark'. He won the 2015 Academy Award for Best Sound Editing along with David White for their work on 'Mad Max: Fury Road'.

A native of Boston, Mark Mangini was a foreign language major in college, until he could no longer ignore his love of film and moved to Los Angeles to pursue a career in sound design. Mangini's first job in entertainment was

as a cartoon sound editor at Hanna Barbera Studios. He has spent his entire 42-year career in Hollywood imagining and composing altered sonic realities for motion pictures. He is a frequent lecturer, an outspoken proponent for sound as art and a guitarist/songwriter.

"Having grown up a musician, I am avowed of the idea that all organized sound is music. I see my work in movies every bit a composition as those of Beethoven and the Beatles. I just happen to use dissonance, specious melodic content and arrhythmia to its fullest

advantage. My works are no less considered, designed, creative or manipulative. They just aren't hummable."

He founded and ran Weddington Productions, a successful Hollywood post-production sound company for 25 years. Today he works at the Formosa Group in Hollywood, California continuing his work as a supervising sound editor, sound designer and re-recording mixer on such recent films as 'Black Mass' (2015) and 'The Accountant' (2016).

Phedon Papamichael

Phedon Papamichael is an Academy Award-nominated and internationally acclaimed cinematographer. He now counts over 45 features to his credit including the early blockbusters 'While You Were Sleeping' and 'Cool Runnings', as well as many critically acclaimed films, such as 'Unstrung Heroes' (Un Certain Regard, Cannes 1995), and 'Unhook the Stars' (1996). Phedon was accepted as a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in 1997, where he served several years on the Cinematographers Branch Executive Committee.

'The Million Dollar Hotel', was chosen as the Opening Film of the 2000 Berlin Film Festival and won the Grand Jury Prize, the Silver Bear, as well as the Golden Camera. '27 Missing Kisses', premiered at Directors Fortnight in Cannes and garnered the Grand Prix Award at the 2000 New York/Avignon Film Festival, the Audience Award at the 2000 Montpellier Film Festival, as well as the Kodak Vision Award for Best Cinematography.

In 2001, Phedon shot 'Moonlight Mile', directed by Brad Silberling, starring Dustin Hoffman and Susan Sarandon. It was followed by 'Identity', directed by James Mangold, and the Oscar-nominated 'Sideways',



directed by Alexander Payne. His credits continued with 'The Weatherman', and 'Walk the Line', again directed by Mangold. Phedon also shot the Academy Award-nominated western '3:10 to Yuma', and the blockbuster 'Pursuit of Happyness'. Incredibly, he shot two of the most award-winning films of 2011, Alexander Payne's 'The Descendants' and 'The Ides of March', directed by George Clooney.

For his exceptional black and white lensing on the highly acclaimed 'Nebraska' (2013), which received six Academy Award nominations, Phedon received an Oscar nomination, a BAFTA nomination and an ASC nomination. Phedon's fifth collaboration with director James Mangold, 'Ford Vs Ferrari / Le Mans 66' received four Academy Award nominations including Best Picture.

Qumra Projects

Twenty-eight feature-length, eleven short film, and seven series projects at various stages of production have been selected to benefit from the experience of bespoke mentorship and business meetings with international experts. The primary motive of this online 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.

Development Feature Narrative

‘**81**’ by Dawood Al-Anwari and Ali Al Ansari
‘**Arabnovela**’ by A.J. Al-Thani
‘**Behind Closed Doors**’ by Hend Fakhroo
‘**Beirut 1931**’ by Kamal Aljafari
‘**Dowayha**’ by Mahdi Ali Ali
‘**Down and Out in Doha**’ by Waheed Khan and Fahad Al Kuwari
‘**Nezouh**’ by Soudade Kaadan
‘**Omar La Fraise**’ by Elias Belkedar
‘**Queens**’ by Yasmine Benkiran
‘**Sabah**’ by Ben Robinson
‘**Vanishing**’ by Lucien Bourjeily

Development Feature Documentary

‘**The Flower Men**’ by Yousra Ishaq
‘**Kashkash**’ by Lea Najjar
‘**Machtat**’ by Sonia Ben Slama
‘**Searching for Kikhia**’ (working title) by Jihan Kikhia

Director / Screenwriter:
Dawood Al-Anwari
Ali Al Ansari

Co-screenwriters:
Fahad Al-Kuwari
Mohamed Al-Ibrahim
Yasser Al-Naemi

Producers:
Abdulaziz Al-Malki
Ahmed Al Baker

Company Profile:
Katara Studios is the world's most technically equipped audio/audio-visual facility located in the burgeoning hub of the Middle East, Doha, Qatar. The company boasts three studios including a full orchestral room, as well as a world-class mastering facility, full video production and Dolby Atmos Feature Film Dubbing Theatre.

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Katara Studios
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'81

Qatar / Arabic, English
Genre: **Sports**
Interests: **Action, Sports, History, Based on a True Story, Epic**

Based on the true story, coach Evaristo guides the underdog Qatari youth team to a historical display at the 1981 FIFA Youth World Championships in Australia.



When tasked by officials to pursue entry into the 1981 FIFA Youth World Championships in Australia, Evaristo finds himself in the position of building a team from scratch. After initial doubt, Evaristo's outlook changes once he starts scouting for talent on the dirt-covered streets of Doha. After handpicking a squad of misfits, they embark on a journey of various training camps. There, the team learns to adhere to Evaristo's method of the off-side trap and counterattack. The side qualifies and even prevails in the first round of the tournament, only to realize that they will play against the tournament favourites, Brazil and England. Through determination, skill, and strategy, Evaristo leads the Qatari team to an unprecedented final. They are defeated, but return as heroes, winning the hearts and minds of Qatari citizens and football fans around the world.

Ali Al Anssari



Ali Al Anssari is a media graduate from Bangor University, North Wales. He began practising photography

many years ago and has now made the transition to cinematography and directing. Ali directed 'I' in 2012 and 'Qarar' in 2014, and both have been invited to numerous film festivals, and were featured in the Cannes Film Festival's Short Film Corner.

Dawood Al-Anwari



Dawood Al-Anwari is a Graphic Design graduate from Virginia Commonwealth University in

Qatar. He began working on films as an assistant art director in 2010. Al-Anwari was a lead designer in Medinah in 2015-16 and an art director for Khameskom Falla in 2016. Other works include multiple short films and tvcs. Dawood currently works at the Doha Film Institute.

Abdulaziz Al-Malki



Abdulaziz Al-Malki is a sports professional and academic. He has been involved in the sports industry

since 1989. He started his career in physiotherapy upon graduating from Qatar University with a bachelor's degree in Physical Education. Abdulaziz then transitioned to working at Al-Rayyan Sports Club in Qatar, where he managed the youth basketball team, leading them to win the 1999 Arab Championship. Abdulaziz is also a certified referee in a variety of sports, including Olympic swimming, tennis, bowling, and athletics. Throughout his career, Abdulaziz has been involved in the organization of several tournaments and championships in Qatar, including the 1995 Youth Championship, the 2006 Asian Cup, and the Handball World Championship for Clubs. He has also been involved in academics as a teacher from 1996 and until 2010.

Ahmed Al Baker



With a decade of experience in film and television, Ahmed Al Baker started his career as a co-founder of Qatari based

production company Innovation Films. Since then, Al Baker has produced a variety of films, television series,

commercials, and music videos. He is known for his role as a showrunner and creator of the first international sci-fi/adventure series from the Middle East 'Medinah'. Al Baker also directed episodes of an upcoming Katara Studios original titled 'The Pact' (Robert Knepper, James Marshall) as well as directing an episode of us/Romania tv series titled 'Three Knee Deep'. Currently, Al Baker is the Head of Film Production at Katara Studios.

Director's Note

Qatar has a large pool of success stories, all of which exist in the collective unconscious, but have yet to be reimaged in an audio-visual format. This project is an attempt to shed light on one of these stories and arguably the most significant achievement in Arab football history. In 1981, it seemed as though the Middle East was crumbling around us—civil war in Lebanon, revolution in Iran, the assassination of Al Sadat in Egypt—we were in dire need of hope. These young players provided the Arab diaspora with the optimism it so desperately needed. Although the team lost the final match, they won the hearts and minds of fans around the world. Qatar is on the verge of hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup, now is the time to document this achievement, and bring it back to life through the cinematic medium. This story is a testament to the power of sports to bring people together and act as a global mission of diplomacy, peace, and hope.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Budget: **\$600,000**

Looking For:

- Co-producers
- Funding

Director / Screenwriter:
A.J. Al-Thani

Screenwriter:
Hamida Issa

Contact:
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Arabnovela

Qatar / Arabic / 2020
Genre: **Comedy, Drama**
Interests: **The Middle East, Tribalism, Female Empowerment**

Set in Doha, Qatar in 1997, ‘Arabnovela’ is a satirical story about how society and family can crush dreams. A young woman named Noor dreams of becoming a khaleeji telenovela actress. She lives a double life as she juggles being an actress under the alias of Reem Ahmed and her actual job as a resident doctor from her family.



A satirical look into how Arab society inhibits dreams and destroys untraditional romances. The story follows the journey of Noor, a resident doctor in a hospital but also an aspiring telenovela actress. She is acting in a low budget week-long theatre production of ‘Snow White’ but has to conceal the pursuit of her dream from her mother, Al Anood. Noor hides under the alias of ‘Reem Ahmed’, using make-up to lighten her skin and alter her features so that nobody can recognize her. When her Uncle Nasser, the father and patriarchal figure in her life spots her on the opening night of the show, she quits acting entirely until another opportunity arises. A ‘Romeo & Juliet’ Ramadan telenovela show that is advertised as the biggest show the Arab world has ever produced and it’s calling out for auditions on a local tv chat program. Noor meets the Qatari director Khalifa and auditions for him, but he brings in his best friend from film school in LA called Tarek. The show’s investor and son of a big-time producer. She gets the role of Juliet (Al Jazi) that was originally the role for Tarek’s ex-girlfriend Madawi. As Noor lives her dream of being a telenovela actress, she is also being courted by Tarek. The consequences of her dream lead to many unpleasant revelations.

A.J. Al-Thani



A.J. Al-Thani is an award-winning Qatari filmmaker film, television and commercial director. She graduated from Northwestern University with a degree in Communications and a concentration in film. She began to pursue her dream of being a filmmaker with the launch of the Doha Film Institute (DFI). Her relationship with the Institute began in 2010 when she participated in one of its first film workshops, which opened the door for many local filmmakers to pursue their passion. For almost ten years, she has been developing her skills with the help of the Institute. A.J. Has made two short films ‘Kashta’ (2016) & ‘The Black Veil’ (2020).

Hamida Issa



Hamida Issa is a Qatari filmmaker, writer and producer. She graduated with a BA in Politics from University College London and an MA in Global Cinemas and the Transcultural from SOAS. Hamida has worked for the education team at the Doha Film Institute, and in 2011 made her first short film, ‘15 Heartbeats’ which premiered at the Doha Tribeca Film Festival. She has made many short films ever since, including video art and a music video ‘Gamar’ for world-renowned Palestinian band 47 Soul. She was the first Qatari woman in history to step foot on Antarctica, and she is currently editing her first feature-length documentary, ‘Places of the Soul’, about that experience.

Director’s Note

Born in Doha in the 1990s, I am from the generation of transition. The generation that remembers the switch from analogue to digital. The generation that remembers the barren desert land before the skyscrapers—when Doha was on the cusp of modernity. I have never seen a film that represents me the way I envision this film. How I struggle to balance between old and new. With this film, I am criticizing oriental perceptions of the Gulf and Arab world. There is also the matter of self-orientalization that has come with the rapid changes of such a massive transition. This film is an ode to my childhood, an ode to artistic dreams and an ode to being an Arab woman. I believe that this film will show the world what it is truly like to grow up and witness such a transition. How we find love in the new world, chase big dreams, but ultimately the guards of the old world end our love and dreams in tragedy. This film is our truth.

Looking For:

- Co-producers
- Funding

Director / Screenwriter:
Hend Fakhroo

Producer:
Justin Kramer

Company Profile

Made up of talented, experienced and creative storytellers, producers, documentarians, animators, photographers and filmmakers, The Film House is an award-winning Doha-based film, video, and multi-media production company unlike any other in the region. With a wealth of local knowledge and with Qatar’s community in mind, the company is primed to foster local talent and to redefine visual storytelling in the region. The Film House is home for high-calibre international and local productions.

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Justin Kramer
The Film House
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Behind Closed Doors

Qatar / Arabic
Genre: **Drama**
Interests: **Women’s Issues, Psychology, Social Issues**

Six-year-old Leila wakes up one day and finds her mother gone with only her father to take care of her. After months of trying, the small family finally settles into an emotional equilibrium, only to have their mother suddenly return.



Qatar. Six-year-old Leila wakes up one morning and finds out that her mother, Sara, is gone. Leila becomes completely dependent on her father, Ali, especially for emotional support. Days turn into weeks, and Ali cannot take care of Leila by himself. He becomes compelled to hire Rosa as a live-in caretaker for Leila. Leila and Rosa quickly forge a strong bond, and the three of them fall into a comfortable routine, until one day Ali announces that his wife is coming back. When Sara left, she checked herself into a mental rehabilitation centre following a suicide attempt. Her return will threaten the well-being of the entire family, including herself.

Hend Fakhroo



Hend Fakhroo is a Qatari writer and director. Hend graduated with honours in 2005 from St Edward’s University in Austin, Texas. She directed her first short ‘His Name’ in 2012 and her second ‘The Waiting Room’ in 2016. Both have done well on the festival circuit. Hend has been developing her first feature, ‘Behind Closed Doors’, for three years and has participated in the Hezayah writing lab with screen doctor Antoine LeBos.

Justin Kramer



Justin Kramer is an American producer based in Qatar. Having previously worked on projects for HBO, MTV, CNN, and AMC among others, his producing and directing have been seen in numerous award-winning short films, tv shows, documentaries, and commercials. In 2012, Kramer founded The Film House in Doha. He was selected to participate as one of the Up & Coming Producers at the Torino Film Lab event in 2018. Kramer continues to work with filmmakers in Qatar while producing international films such as ‘Mala Mala’ by Antonio Santini and Dan Sickles and episodes of the BBC drama series ‘McMafia’.

Director’s Note

This film takes an intimate look at a family from three different female points of view, all centring around the father figure. It’s important for me to show how different perceptions can affect a person’s judgement, especially within an abusive marriage. The idea of making a film, and opening a discussion, about emotional and physical abuse is taboo in most of the world, let alone in Arab countries. It’s time we took a closer look at our immediate surroundings.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION Total Budget: **\$700,000**

Looking For:
• Funding

Director / Screenwriter / Producer:
Kamal Aljafari

Contact:
Kamal Aljafari
aljafarifilms@gmail.com

Development / Feature Narrative

Beirut 1931

Palestine, Qatar / Arabic
Genre: **Drama**
Interests: **Family, Exile**

A man arrives in his native Jaffa after the sudden death of his uncle, who was kept in a mental hospital for over 25 years. Like a lurking shadow, the man would only occasionally visit his family back home—but this trip quickly leads him into an oscillation between the present crisis and memories from the last 70 years.



“K.” arrives in his native Jaffa after the disappearance of “M.” Like a lurking shadow, “M.” would only occasionally visit his family home—mostly over weekends—and would sometimes disappear for long periods of time. The visits he pays to hospitals and ministries in search for him prove futile, albeit for the fact that they drive him into a sort of labyrinth inside the Tel Aviv of today. But this is just one illustration of the extent to which the lines between the real and the fictitious are totally blurred. When “K.” finds a trace of “M.” in the background of an Israeli fiction film as he accidentally roams the street behind the shooting locale, the haziness between fiction and reality is accentuated further. Meanwhile, in the streets, “K.” watches a film crew as they prepare a real-time explosion to destroy the last iconic building left in Jaffa.

Kamal Aljafari



Kamal Aljafari works with moving and still images, interweaving between fiction, non-fiction, and art. Kamal’s past films include ‘Unusual Summer’ (2020), ‘Recollection’ (2015), ‘Port of Memory’ (2009), and ‘The Roof’ (2006). He was a featured artist at the Robert Flaherty Film Seminar (NYC) and was a Fellow at Harvard University’s Radcliffe Institute and Film Study Center.

Director’s Note

What kind of madness is it to remain in a place that is lost to you? Where else might he have gone on his furtive escapes from the mental asylum? What departures are possible, if one no longer has a self to leave from?

Looking For:
• Funding

Director / Screenwriter / Producer:
Mahdi Ali Ali

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Mahdi Ali Ali
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Development / Feature Narrative

Dowayha

Qatar / Arabic, English
Genre: **Drama**
Interests: **Family & Social Issues, Children's Rights**

A boy goes through a psychological change process to discover the reason for the divorce of his parents.



Sultan belongs to a broken family. His parents went through a messy divorce, and as a result, he ends up cast away to an orphanage. Through a series of strange and mysterious dreams, Sultan decides to escape from the orphanage in search of a better life. His dreams begin to blur with reality, and his strange psychological journey ultimately leads him to discover the reason behind his family's breakup.

Mahdi Ali Ali



Mahdi Ali Ali is a Qatari filmmaker and a manager in the Training and Education Department at the Doha Film Institute. Through the years, he has successfully worked with major industry players in providing filmmakers in Qatar with comprehensive learning initiatives. Mahdi has contributed as Executive Producer and supervisor on more than 30 short films produced by the Institute. He holds an MFA from EICAR, the International Film School of Paris, and has made short films including 'Champs Elysées, I Love You' (2009), 'The Gulf Habibi' (2011), as well as other shorts for Al Jazeera Documentary and Al Jazeera Children's Channels.

Director's Note

In Qatar, the divorce rate is high, and the reasons for this are quite uncertain. Many people believe these breakups are due to financial reasons or differences between partners. I wanted to explore the more sensitive areas of the issue. It began as a personal matter influenced by a family difficulty and expanded across the community as I noticed its recurrence in other societies and all walks of life.

**FINANCIAL
INFORMATION**

Total Budget: **\$1,000,000**

- Looking For:
- Financing Advice
 - Mentorship
 - Script Consultation
 - Workshops & Labs

Director / Screenwriter:
Waheed Khan, Fahad Al Kuwari

Contact:
Waheed Khan
wkdirector@gmail.com

Down and Out in Doha

Qatar / English, Arabic
Genre: **Musical**

A young, reckless Qatari man abandons his fortune in a challenge and learns that there is more to life than money.



Naz, a 21-year-old Qatari orphan, leads a superficial life. After causing a car accident, his Grandmother decides to teach him a lesson. For the next seven days, Naz is to give up his life of luxury and complete a series of challenges that force him to step out of his comfort zone. Ghareeb, the father of Aisha, the young woman he crashed into ups the stakes. If Naz fails the game, he is to marry Aisha, and in turn, Ghareeb will have access to his future son in laws fortunes. Aisha is forced by her father to project manage Naz's progress or face having her college funds stopped. Reluctantly, she agrees. Naz and Aisha despise each other; however, they are forced to hang out. What starts as a bitter feud of indifference turns into potential love. Naz must win the challenge for self-respect. Aisha needs to make decisions about her life, and Ghareeb is willing to do whatever it takes to control Naz's wealth and destiny.

Waheed Khan



Waheed writes and directs documentaries, short films, and commercials/spots. He has filmed in mosques, prisons, clubs, hospitals, universities, schools, temples, drug dens, and on covert assignments. His narratives are compelling, visual and often humorous yet left field, insightful and fun. His films focus on characters that are on the margins of society; outsiders, rebels and misfits. Waheed's films have been broadcast on Channel 4, ITV and the BBC. Short narrative films include 'Orange People' (2004), 'Dohard' (2010), 'Double Apple' (2018) and 'Arnie Syndrome' (2020).

Fahad Al-Kuwari



Fahad Ahmed Al-Kuwari is an award-winning writer and art director who began his career in filmmaking on the sets of Mira Nair's 'The Reluctant Fundamentalist' (2012). As an Art Director with Doha Film Institute, Fahad worked on several Qatari Film Fund short films including 'Al-Johara' (2015), 'Our Time is Running Out' (2016) and 'A Journey to from Love' (2017). He also wrote and directed 'Ruqya' (2010) and wrote the screenplay for 'I' (2012). Fahad is the joint recipient of a Merit Award from The CIDA Awards for Excellence for developing a production design curriculum for Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar, where he is a guest lecturer.

Director's Note

We want Arab audiences to laugh and have fun with cinema, and we want our on-screen characters to do the same—hence, we are making a musical. Depiction of the Arab world in cinema is usually veiled in pain and suffering, which is an unfortunate political reality in this region. Comedy and music are magical tools that help us cope with pain—they allow us to hold a mirror towards society for us to acknowledge our flaws and our wounds, and for us to learn how to cope with the absurdity of life. Doha as a city is in many ways like our protagonist, Naz. Both are young, wealthy, and living life in the fast lane. A growing economy and the constant pursuit of wealth can sometimes blind us from slowing down and paying attention to what really matters. Once you closely examine the nuances of life in Doha, you come to realize that there's another layer of richness that we need to pay enough attention to—an abundance of cultural diversity. The look and feel is lively and animated. Characters often talk to camera, "Breaking the fourth wall". We, the audience, become Naz's therapists. This style punctuates the comedy beats. The camera whips and spins and dances. Musical numbers are spectacular, and the songs always inform the narrative.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Budget: **\$2,000,000**

Looking For:

- Co-producers
- Funding
- Post-production Partners

Director / Screenwriter:
Soudade Kaadan

Company Profile

Kaf Production is a Syrian production house, based in Lebanon, and founded in late 2008 by Amira Kaadan and Soudade Kaadan. The Company was crafted from the sisterhood and friendship of both founders. Kaf produced several award-winning documentaries and their first feature fiction film 'The Day I Lost my Shadow' won the Lion of the Future for Best Debut Film at Venice Film Festival 2018. Kaf's latest production, 'Aziza', won the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance 2019.

Contact:
Soudade Kaadan
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skaadan@kafproduction.com

Nezouh

Syria, Lebanon, Qatar / Arabic

Genre: **Drama**

Interests: **Children, Coming-of-Age, Immigration, War, Women's Issues**

A bomb falls on Zeina's house opening for her a window to a new life.



During the Syrian conflict in Damascus, a missile destroys the ceiling of Zeina's house. She is 12 years old, and for the first time, she is sleeping under the stars. She had previously been forbidden even to open a window. For the first time, she sees the outside world and makes friends with Amer, the boy next door. But Zeina feels guilty about her short-lived happiness when she sees her father, Mutaz, burst into tears at the sight of the destruction to his house and life. He hangs a bedsheet on every falling wall until her house looks like a grotesque tent. When the violence in Damascus escalates, Amer's family decides to leave. But Zeina's father refuses to become a refugee and tries everything to stop his family from leaving his home/improvised tent. The women in the family, though, have nothing more to lose and join the others who are fleeing. Zeina soon discovers that a window is now opening up to a new life for her.

Soudade Kaadan



Soudade Kaadan is a Syrian director, born in France. She studied theatre criticism in the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts in Syria and filmmaking in Saint Joseph University (IESAV) Lebanon. Her first feature fiction film 'The Day I Lost My Shadow' was awarded the Lion of the Future Award for Best Debut Film at Venice Film Festival 2018 and has been screened in several festivals including TIFF, BFI, Busan and IFFR. Her recent short film 'Aziza' won the Sundance Grand Jury Prize in 2019. Currently, she is working on her second feature film 'Nezouh' selected and awarded at Atelier de Cannes 2019.

Director's Note

It was only after the bombing started in our neighbourhood in Damascus that I left the house with my sister. Damascene society was really closed even in liberated families. Women were allowed to travel, work, study, everything but to live alone. With the new wave of displacement, it's becoming normal for the first time to see young Damascene women living alone and separating from their families. Many of my friends started to make decisions they would never dare to make before. Now, sadly, that there is no more society and its structure and priorities have changed, something new happened. In the middle of war, chaos and tragedy, there is always some light and some freedom. Media is unable to notice this change since the stories of armed men with religious flags are more captivating than stories of women opening the house door in wartime. "Nezouh" in Arabic is the displacement of soul and people; it is the displacement of spirits and bodies in Syria. And with displacement, there is definitely change. 'Nezouh' tries to talk about this inevitable invasion of light in the middle of this chaos. It is maybe also about the displacement of darkness.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Budget: **\$1,300,000**
Secured Financing: **\$105,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Baumi Award
- Cinereach
- Doha Film Institute
- Kino ARTE

Looking For:

- Co-producers
- Consultation
- Financing
- Funding

Director / Screenwriter:
Elias Belkedar

Co-screenwriters:
Jérôme Pierrat
Thomas Bidegain

Producers:
Mourad Belkeddar
Yacine Medkour
Salem Brahimi

Company Profile

Iconoclast Films is an audiovisual production company created in 2011 by Mourad Belkeddar, Nicolas Lhermitte and Charles-Marie Anthonioz. After having produced numerous commercial films and clips thanks to its incubator of renowned talents—Harmony Korine, Gus Van Sant, Romain Gavras, Yoann Lemoine, So Me, Paul Gore, and Edouard Salier. They joined forces in 2012 with Jean Duhamel to create Iconoclast Films. The company has an office in Los Angeles where Harmony Korine’s latest film, ‘The Beach Bum’, was co-produced with Matthew McConaughey and Gus Van’s latest feature film, ‘Don’t Worry He Won’t Get Far on Foot’ with Joaquin Phoenix and Jonah Hill. In 2018, ‘The World Is Yours’ by Romain Gavras, with Vincent Cassel and Isabelle Adjani released in French theatres. A few months later, ‘At Eternity’s Gate’, a film by Julian Schnabel co-produced by Iconoclast Films, was presented at the Venice Mostra. Antoine de Bary’s first feature film, ‘My Days of Glory’, will be released in theatres in 2020, selected in the Orizzonti section of the 2019 Venice Film Festival.

Contact:
Rachel Bou Fayssal
Iconoclast Films
rachel@iconoclastfilms.tv

Omar La Fraise

Algeria, France, Qatar / French
Genre: **Drama, Comedy, Music**
Interests: **Identity, Redemption**

Omar, a crook forced to be on the run in Algeria, needs to quiet down to avoid prison. Deprived of adrenalin, he swings between his urges and strikes his own balance.



Omar Zerrouki, better known by his street name Omar la Fraise, is an old school gangster. Forced to flee from France to Algiers, he now lives off petty scams alongside with his sidekick Krimo. But the axe falls: the French courts sentence him to 20 years of jail time. To stay in Algiers, away from French prisons, Omar must now clean up his act. But so far he has known little else than a life of crime and violence: transitioning to normal human relations governed by a social contract and healthy communication will be easier said than done. Not to mention earning an honest living. Omar manages to find a job in a pastry factory. But quiet daily routine is not Omar’s way: deprived of the adrenaline of his former life, he relapses and starts mixing with a gang of violent kids from the streets of Algiers. Factory boss by day, thug by night: Omar thinks he has found some kind of balance to cope with this newfound life on the straight path... until he meets Samia. As he will discover, violence and petty crime are incompatible with love. The death of his friend Krimo will make him aware of his vital need for change. With the help of Samia, Omar will finally free himself.

Elias Belkeddar



Elias Belkeddar is a Franco-Algerian producer, director and writer. In the past five years, he has produced music

videos, short films and feature films at Iconoclast Films. He co-wrote the first feature film of director Antoine de Bary ‘My Days of Glory’, which was screened at the Venice Film Festival in 2019. The film stars Vincent Lacoste and Emmanuelle Devos. In 2018, he directed his first short film ‘A Wedding Day’, selected at the 57th Semaine de la Critique where he won the Canal+ Award. The film was also screened at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

Mourad Belkeddar

Mourad Belkeddar is a Franco-Algerian producer. Alongside his associates, he founded the french companies Iconoclast in 2011, then Iconoclast Films in order to produce feature films such as ‘The Beach Bum’, ‘The World Is Yours’ and ‘My Days of Glory’. Iconoclast has produced various films in France and abroad. He produced ‘A Wedding Day’ directed by Elias Belkeddar in Algiers which won an award at the Semaine de la Critique in Cannes in 2018.

Yacine Medkour



Yacine Medkour was born in Algeria, and studied economic and social sciences in Geneva and Paris.

Through a partnership formed with Iconoclast production came a short film titled ‘Un jour de mariage’, directed by Elias Belkeddar, which won the Canal+ Prize of Critics’ Week at the Cannes Festival, and was nominated for a prize at TIFF. In this same vein, a short film by Azzedine Kasri ‘Tlimoura’ received more than four festival awards, including the Grand Prix for best short film at the Luxor Festival, and a special mention from the jury of the Bethlehem Festival. In advertising and in cinema, Medkour enjoys showcasing his country to artists, and has the ambition of changing people’s perceptions. Medkour wants to tell the story of the new, modern Algeria, which is often ignored by both the local and international media.

Director’s Note

Cinema and Algeria are integral to my life. The cowboy movies of my father’s childhood screened in Algeria echo my childhood summers spent running around in Algiers. Algeria has always been a land of adventures, dangers and tales that mix sweeping collective history with individual stories. Algeria has a power that turns history into myth, from the War of Independence to the “hirak”. My deepest desire is to take the stories Algeria offered me as a heritage and give back to Algeria a story of my own. I feel close to Omar, as he and I were raised in France. As he, my itinerary—he through his life of crime, I through cinema—took me back to Algeria. As he, I rediscovered Algeria through love. There are very few films made in Algeria. I feel an urgency to take fiction and mythology and bring them to the silver screen.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- Financial Partners:
- C+ Afrique
 - Canal+
 - Centre National de Cinema (CNC)
 - Ciné+
 - Doha Film Institute
 - Ministry of Culture of Algeria
 - StudioCanal

- Looking For:
- Financing
 - Sales Agents

Director / Screenwriter:
Yasmine Benkiran

Producers:
Jean des Forêts
Säïd Hamich

Company Profile

Founded in 2010, Petit Film is based in Paris. We produce and co-produce films from a selection of French and international directors, cineastes, visual artists, formalists and storytellers. At all times, we work in close cooperation with distributors, sales agents and festivals.

Contact:
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Petit Film
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Queens

Morocco, France, Belgium, Qatar / Arabic (Darija)
Genre: **Drama, Adventure**
Interests: **Women's Emancipation, Myths & Legends**

To give her daughter a brighter future, 27-year-old Zineb escapes from prison and kidnaps her 9-year-old, Ines. On the road, she holds up a truck, taking the young Asma hostage and forcing her to drive them away from the police. From this road trip in a truck soon flourishes a deep friendship.



Casablanca, Morocco. 27-year-old Zineb is a repeat offender behind bars. When she learns that her wild and fanciful nine-year-old daughter, Inès, has been expelled from school and sent to a children's home, she escapes from prison, kidnaps her daughter, and heads south. On the road, she holds up a truck driven by the young Asma and takes her hostage. Zineb is loud spoken and unpredictable. Asma, on the other hand, is quiet and hardened to life. They appear to have nothing in common, but Inès' fate brings them together in a mission to offer the child a proper future. The trio soon has the police on their tail, thus starting a long escape that takes them across the rugged red terrain and flower-filled valleys of the Atlas to finally reach the Atlantic coast.

Yasmine Benkiran



Yasmine Benkiran grew up on the Moroccan Atlantic coast and came to Paris when she was 18. As a screenwriter, she writes for both television and cinema. She is currently developing 'Black Library', an anthology television series of mixed genre (fantasy, psychological thriller, science-fiction) as well as 'On the Nile', an animated spy movie. In 2018, Yasmine directed her first short film, 'Winter Time' (Tangier IFF, Off-courts Trouville). She is now developing her first feature film as a director, 'Queens'.

Jean des Forêts



Through his Paris-based company Petit Film, Jean des Forêts produces and co-produces French and international films, at all times working in close cooperation with distributors and sales agents. His recent credits include 'The Girl With the Bracelet' by Stéphane Demoustier (2019, Locarno Piazza Grande, BFI), 'Diane Has the Right Shape' by Fabien Gorgeart (2017, Unifrance MyFFF Jury Award), 'Raw' by Julia Ducournau (2016, Cannes Critic's Week - Fipresci prize), and 'Aloys' by Tobias Nölle (2016, Berlinale Panorama- Fipresci prize). He is currently in production of 'earwig' by Lucile Hadzihalilovic. His current slate includes new films by Yasmine Benkiran, David Moreau, and Joyce A. Nashawati. Jean des Forêts is EAVE national coordinator for France, and he is also a member of the Unifrance professional committee.

Director's Note

Astral calm. Meandering asphalt and never-ending, empty roads. Your only companions—the trucks. Whoever has travelled in Morocco has met these vehicles. Massive, creaking, they climb the mountains and seem to defy gravity. I spent a part of my childhood on these roads, alone with my mother, and with these trucks that scared and fascinated me in turn. From this was born my desire to bring this powerful vehicle to the screen and make it both the instrument of a woman's liberation and, ultimately, of her damnation. 'Queens' explores various female figures in this yet unresolved era. Do you remain a quietly obedient virginal effigy? Or emancipate yourself at the cost of attracting scorn and disgrace? Freedom comes at a cost: it will turn Asma into an outlaw. Nothing behind, and everything ahead—Zineb, Asma and Inès find themselves propelled onto the road. Queens is an adventure movie with political scope. Furthermore, there is a specific, dark poetry I want to distil throughout the film. As the story progresses, the film builds bridges between fairytale and reality and slides into another genre. It embodies a desire for cinema on the side of childhood, magic, hope and the wish to believe.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Budget: **\$1,316,669**
Secured Financing: **\$232,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- AFAC - Arab Culture Fund
- CNC
- Creative Europe - MEDIA
- Doha Film Institute
- Kinology - International Sales (MC)

Looking For:

- Equity
- Distribution
- Pre-sales

Screenwriter / Producer :

Ben Robinson

Producer :

Ahmed Al-Baker

Company Profile

‘Sabah’ was developed amongst a small group of Qatari and expat filmmakers, at Doha Film Institute. Our aim is to create boldly original films that explore difficult personal or social topics in daring ways across multiple genres; appealing to both festival and commercial audiences. Wherever possible, cast and crew will be drawn primarily from Qatar, helping to accelerate the growth of the country’s film industry. During its first year of development, ‘SABAH’ attracted the attention of leading Qatari producer Ahmed Al-Baker at Katara Studios, who has boarded the project to steer the next stages of development and production.

Contact:

Ben Robinson

brobinson@dohafilminstitute.com

Sabah

Qatar / Arabic, English

Genre: **Drama**

Interests: **Teenage Identity, Censorship, Bipolar Disorder, Meta-narrative**

After a conservative Twitter campaign shuts down a high school play for its satirical content, a rebellious Qatari teenager directs her fellow drama students to broadcast their controversial performance live across social media.



When a Doha High School is attacked on social media for publicising a controversial play, headmaster Mr. Harrelson decides to ban the performance. Unfortunately for him, this play has been written and directed by self-styled “Theatre-Punk” Maryam (16), a rebellious Qatari teenager who would rather die than see her theatrical vision destroyed. With her play cancelled, Maryam suffers a devastating anxiety attack that reignites her bipolar, self-harming behaviour. This play was the only thing keeping her depression under control amidst her parent’s impending divorce. Luckily for her, Maryam is surrounded by loving friends: her cast and crew (The Theatre Punks). In an act of creative defiance, they barricade the doors and windows of the school, and broadcast their play live on social media, ignoring all possible consequences. Life and art collapse into each other as Maryam attempts to control her mental illness just long enough to perform her masterpiece and change the world. Featuring astounding sets and costumes, Maryam’s avant-garde play depicts a manic future society of lost children and parents, searching for meaning amidst a sea of technology and mindless consumerism. But trouble is brewing outside in the carpark—the Twitter trolls have sent the police and emergency forces to shut the whole thing down...

Ben Robinson



Since joining DFI in 2009, Ben has produced almost 100 short films with Qatari and local filmmakers, and

currently serves as a producer for the Qatari Film Fund. Ben won the ‘BBC Funny Hunt’ Award in 2006 for a sitcom pilot ‘Hooray for Holloway!’ and co-produced/shot multi-award-winning short ‘Night of the Hell Hamsters’. His comedy Shorts ‘Slash Hive’ (2007) and ‘Neon Killer’ (2008) were both official selections at Film4Frightfest in the UK. In 2012, Ben co-produced ‘Yellow’ and ‘The Halloween Kid’, both official selections for Sitges Fantasy and Horror Festival. In 2013, Ben wrote and directed ‘Cosmic Phoenix’, the world’s first Arabic-language Sci-Fi Comedy. Ben is an alumnus of Berlinale Talent Campus and Werner Herzog’s Rogue Film School.

Ahmed Al-Baker



A decade of experience in Film and Television, Ahmed started his career as a co-founder of

Qatari based production company Innovation Films. Since then, Al Baker has produced a variety of films, television series, commercials, and music videos. Known for his role as a showrunner and creator of the first international Sci-Fi/Adventure series from the Middle East ‘Medinah’. Al Baker also directed episodes of an upcoming Katara Studios original titled ‘The Pact’ (Robert Knepper, James Marshall) as well as directing an episode of US/Romania TV series titled ‘Three Knee Deep’. Currently, Al Baker is the Head of Film Production at Katara Studios.

Director’s Note

‘Sabha’ is a fast-moving dramatic comedy depicting the wild events of one Saturday morning in a Qatari teenager’s life. In an era where smartphone-addiction and social media-mania mutates our identities and relationships, our young protagonist Maryam decides to wake up her society to this spiritual dry rot via the messages embedded in her play. The initial inspiration for ‘Sabah’ was the real-life banning of a performance at a shopping mall in Qatar, featuring female Qatari dancers and the social media outcry that surrounded it (the dance was subsequently allowed to take place). ‘Sabha’ also metaphorically explores the Qatar blockade, imposed on the country in 2017, and the inspirational way the country came together to express itself through inspired leadership, outspoken media and unprecedented national solidarity. Maryam embodies the visionary, impatient intelligence of the new Qatari woman in this time of flux and evolution.

Director / Screenwriter:
Lucien Bourjeily

Producer:
Farah Shaer

Company Profile

BeirutCUT is an independent film production house, established to be the continuation of the experienced path of its founders who have been working as independent directors and producers on several short films such as ‘I Offered You Pleasure’, ‘Soukoon’, ‘Shakwa’, and one feature film ‘Heaven Without People’. These films participated in acclaimed film festivals such as Telluride Film Festival, Clermont-Ferrand, Busan, LA Film Festival, and Shanghai Film Festival among many others and won several awards such as the Jury Prize at Dubai Film Festival, Motion Picture Association of America Award among many others.

Contact:
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Vanishing

‘Zawal’ / Lebanon, Qatar / Arabic
Genre: **Drama**
Interests: **Social Issues, Politics, Family, Women’s Issues**

Rita, a single mother, juggles her family and work with the crucial help of Zofan—a domestic worker, whose mysterious disappearance draws Rita into an investigative journey with unexpected consequences.



In modern-day Beirut, single mother Rita juggles her work as an investigative journalist with that of caretaker to both her eight-year-old daughter and her elderly mother. A balance made possible only with the crucial help of Zofan—an Ethiopian helper, who has lived with them for several years. However, one day, while Rita is busy filming a report about illegal and corrupt quarries, Zofan mysteriously disappears without a trace. Rita becomes totally engulfed in this intriguing mystery. As she investigates Zofan’s disappearance, Rita’s life is thrown off balance, and she discovers the hidden side of her helper’s life with unexpected consequences on her own.

Lucien Bourjeily



Lucien Bourjeily is a Lebanese writer, director, and political activist who has sought refuge in storytelling

from an early age. His work as a writer/director of both film and theatre awarded him the Fulbright Scholarship to earn his MFA in Filmmaking (2013) at the Loyola Marymount University in LA. He wrote/directed more than a dozen plays, two of them were banned in Lebanon, and another two premiered at the London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT). In 2014, he was nominated for the “Freedom of Expression” award in London by Index on Censorship. His debut feature film ‘Heaven Without People’ (2017) travelled to more than twenty-five film festivals worldwide and won six awards, including the Special Jury Prize at the Dubai International Film Festival.

Farah Shaer



Farah Shaer is a Lebanese producer, director, actress and socio-political activist. Farah’s debut short

fiction film as a director titled ‘I Offered You Pleasure’ (2012) participated in world acclaimed film festivals such as Clermont-Ferrand Film Festival and Busan International Film Festival among others. In 2015, she was awarded a full-ride scholarship to pursue an MFA in Film directing at UCLA as part of a fellowship program titled “Giving voice to the unique perspective of Arab women”. ‘Heaven Without People’ was her first experience as a producer on a feature film. ‘Soukoon’, her latest short film was a semifinalist for the Student Academy Award and premiered at Telluride Film Festival 2019.

Director’s Note

Through my anti-establishment activism, I met many journalists and news reporters. I grew especially close to those favourable to the cause, still uncorrupted by the system. Even though they were well-known and successful investigative reporters, just a couple of years later, I watched them leave, one by one, the TV stations where they worked. The mystery behind their career path led me to this film. Meeting with them, I heard many inside stories that helped me understand what led them to quit. What I came to understand is how omnipresent corruption in Lebanon is, and how the story of these reporters represented so much more than their specific circumstances. I became passionate about delving into the inner life of a citizen who is trying to live outside of a system of corruption that is present in every aspect of life, to show the day-to-day concessions a person must make, and grasp the duality of such an existence. How do we keep on fighting for what we believe in and at what cost? How much of our beliefs, struggles, and memories slowly fade away and vanish as life hits us hard with day-to-day hardships?

FINANCIAL INFORMATION Total Budget: **\$320,000**

- Looking For:
- Co-production
 - Financing
 - Sales Agents
 - Funding

Director :
Yousra Ishaq

Producer:
Sara Ishaq

Company Profile

Comra Films is a Yemen-based film training foundation and production company, co-founded by Sara Ishaq and Yousra Ishaq. The company is made up of a team of highly experienced fixers, award-winning directors, producers and cameramen who combine know-how, creativity and an independent vision with local access and expertise. In Yemen, film studies is non-existent, foreign media access is blocked, and political media outlets control the world's view of Yemen and its people. Therefore, we believe that 'now' is the time for independent Yemeni filmmakers to reclaim their voice and change how the world sees our country and our struggles. At Comra Films, our objective is to promote independent cinema through high-quality training programs and film productions and preserve the essence of its past and present through powerful filmmaking.

Contact:
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The Flower Men

Yemen, Qatar / Arabic
Genre: **Creative Documentary**
Interests: **Current Affairs, Human Rights, Politics, Social Issues**

In Yemen, a country shrouded in complexities, one ancient tribe is split between the borders of two bitter enemies at war with each other. Yet the divided tribe stands against both factions, refusing to be part of the war threatening their respective homelands. But what are their motives, and are they really as united as they seem?



'The Flower Men' is a feature and observational-investigative documentary film that explores the complex reality of one of Yemen's most ancient and powerful tribes—Khawlan Amer, now divided by the war-torn borders of Yemen and Saudi Arabia. The film attempts to compare and contrast the two groups that were once one entity, honing in on the lives and personal relationships of two brothers who live on opposite sides of this border. The brothers were separated earlier in their lives and followed very different paths; one lived a life of wealth and prosperity, while the other lived a life of poverty and hardship. When fighting between Yemen and Saudi Arabia reached catastrophic levels, the tribe made a conscious decision to reject the conflict and protect each other on either side of the warring borders. This film highlights the political twists that turned this tribe into a peace creator.

Yousra Ishaq



Yousra Ishaq is a first-time film director, with a strong background as a film producer in Yemen, facilitating local productions and coordinating multinational teams including international media outlets such as the BBC and PBS between 2013-2017. Yousra studied Business Administration at UUM (Malaysia) and applied her business management skills in versatile and multi-functional environments. In 2017, she co-founded the Yemen-based film foundation and production company, Comra Films. In 2018, one of the projects she worked on for PBS as a field producer was nominated for an Emmy Award.

Sara Ishaq



Sara Ishaq is an Oscar® & BAFTA-nominated filmmaker of Yemeni-Scottish descent, currently based in Amsterdam. Sara was raised in Yemen and pursued her higher at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. From 2011 onwards, she filmed several BBC news items and documentaries, co-founded the Yemen-based media collective #SupportYemen and directed her award-winning independent films, 'Karama Has No Walls' (2012) and 'The Mulberry House' (2013). Sara regularly travels to Sana'a, her hometown in Yemen, where she works and teaches at a film foundation she co-founded called Comra Films. She is currently developing her first fiction feature film, 'The Station'.

Director's Note

When I began film producing in Yemen in 2013, I had a chance to travel and discover unexplored facets of my country. One particular trip to the war-torn North replaced my initial feelings of fear with fascination. The historical, conservative and tribal city of Sadaa was full of contradictions, notably the male dress-code. Men carried weapons yet wore flower-crowns on their heads. As I researched, I learned that these "Flower Men" also exist in a Southern Saudi tribe that goes by the same name as the Northern Yemeni tribe—Khawlan Amer. Later, I also learned the tribe and its families were divided after the establishment of the Saudi Kingdom and the creation of new borders. This film will examine the complex socio-political realities of the Northern-Southern Khawlan Amer tribe; how they relate and differ considering their ancient joint identity, and how the current Saudi-Yemen war impacts the lives of segregated families.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION Total Budget: **\$73,500**

Looking For:
• Financing
• Co-producers
• Post-production

Director / Screenwriter:
Lea Najjar

Co-screenwriter:
Alia Haju

Producers:
Matthias Drescher
Max Brunner

Company Profile

The Film und Fernseh-Labor (FFL) is a production company from Ludwigsburg, Germany, which has been realizing various projects for cinema, tv or online for more than ten years. We are active in fiction, documentaries and advertising. In the past, we have worked with numerous representatives of the broadcasting industry in Germany and produced award-winning films from the critically acclaimed social drama ‘Shifting the Blame’, comedies like ‘Schmidt’s Nine Lives’ or ‘Help, My Mother is having my Baby’ to the Emmy-winning documentary co-production ‘War of Lies’. We are currently working on the documentary ‘Kashkash’ which is being produced in Lebanon.

Contact:
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Kashkash

Lebanon, Germany, Qatar / Arabic
Genre: **Creative Documentary**
Interests: : **Traditions**

In a region torn apart by conflicting traditions, rapid modernization, recurring wars, forced migration, and a myriad of political struggles, we have discovered an unusual link—the age-old Kash-Hamam game of the Levant. As a pastime, vocation, heritage, or addiction, the game spans a unique apolitical network from Syria to Lebanon, connecting people of all religious sects and political views.



In a region torn apart by tradition, modernity, war, geopolitical spheres of influence, migration, and religion, I have discovered an unusual link—the old traditional Kash Hamam game of the Levant. As a pastime, vocation, heritage or addiction, the game spans a unique apolitical network from Syria to Lebanon, connecting people of all religions and political views. Kash Hamam is a game of chance played with pigeons over the rooftops of cities. Each player holds his own flock of birds on the roof and lets his pigeons circle above his house, hoping to lure his neighbour’s pigeons to his roof and thus to enlarge his own flock. The fate of the pigeons is to be gambled from one player to the next. So, the film embarks on a journey through Lebanon, from roof-to-roof we dive into the realities of the luck hunters and their contrasting parallel worlds. Starting with being smuggled from war to safe land, being collected, gambled and tortured but, despite all, loved and admired for being the extension of our freedom which we do not possess on the ground. The doves act as narrative links, lead us to different places and connect our protagonists—a documentary portrait of a region in search of the common denominator in a society defined by differences.

Lea Najjar



Lea Najjar was born in Vienna in 1994 and grew up in Beirut. She graduated from the City International School in Beirut and received her Freshman at the American University of Beirut (AUB) in 2013. She has been studying documentary directing at the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg since 2014, creating several short films that have premiered in numerous international festivals. Currently, she is in the production of her Diploma film, ‘Kashkash’ documentary feature film funded by the swr Young Documentary and the Doha Film Institute.

Alia Haju



Alia Haju, born in 1986, grew up in south Lebanon till she had to flee in 1994 to the UAE with her family because of the Israeli-Lebanese wars. Alia completed her schooling between the UAE and the US, then completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the American

University of Beirut. Since 2010 Alia has worked in various artistic fields, as well as a photographer and Photo editor for Thomson Reuters (2012-2017). Alia has exhibited in numerous exhibitions and won several photography awards, made multiple live music performances and has been published in worldwide media outlets. Her interests shifted to storytelling and documentary filmmaking where she has been working as a full-time freelancer director and filmmaker, covering public interest related issues through investigative journalism.

Max Brunner



Max Brunner, born in Germany 1989, is a producer at Film und Fernseh-Labor Ludwigsburg (FFL) where he is responsible for the documentary department. He studied media economics at the Hochschule der Medien in Stuttgart until 2017. During his studies, he accompanied several FFL productions in various functions and started working as a producer in 2018. He is currently supervising the film ‘Kashkash’ by Lea Najjar, which is being shot in Lebanon.

Director’s Note

Not only does pigeon fancying weave a unique network through Lebanon, but it is also the utmost reflection of every owner and their area. With this film, I see the opportunity to use the politically unencumbered perspective of the doves to fan out the realities of life in Lebanon in a way that penetrates through prejudices and stereotypes and draws an emotional landscape of the region. The Kash Hamem game across the roofs helps leave the player’s sorrows on the ground. This is a matter close to my heart, driven by my love-hate relationship with my homeland, and hoping to bridge divides by portraying an unexpected yet tragic tale of unity. Although there are so many tragic fates, I want this film to be a homage to the dark but almost humorous paths we find to deal with our everyday lives and survive in our chaotic and often deeply unfair realities. This stubborn, almost schizophrenic attitude and the talent of the Lebanese people to redirect their sorrows and enjoy their lives as much as possible under all circumstances is what inspires me personally.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Budget: **\$212,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Doha Film Institute
- FFL
- Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg (Germany)
- MFG Filmförderung Baden-Württemberg
- SWR TV

Looking For:

- Financing
- Co-producers
- Post-production
- Distribution
- Festivals

Director / Screenwriter:
Sonia Ben Slama

Producers:
Tania El Khoury
Cécile Lestrade
Elise Hug

Company Profile

Khamsin Films was founded in 2017 by Tania El Khoury. The company has several ongoing projects from the region including ‘The River’, the newest feature fiction film of Ghassan Salhab, (in post-production) and co-produced with the Postoffice (Lebanon) and Unafilm (Germany), ‘Machtat’, the second feature documentary of Sonia Ben Slama, (in development), co-produced with Alter Ego Production (France) and ‘Heim’, a tv series by Mohammad Abou Laban and Liwaa Yazji (in development).

Contact:
Tania El Khoury
Khamsin Films
khamsinfilms@hotmail.com

Development / Feature Documentary

Machtat

Tunisia, France, Lebanon, Qatar / Arabic
Genre: **Creative Documentary**
Interests: : **Music, Women’s Issues, Family**

The daily life chronicle of Fatma and her daughters Najeh and Waffeh, wedding musicians in a small town in Tunisia.



Fatma and her two daughters Najeh and Waffeh, live in the neighbourhood of Bir Beranek in Mahdia, Tunisia. They are “machtat”, wedding musicians. During the summer they go from one wedding to another to celebrate and bless the union of young women. When this period is over, they return to their work in the fields. Every morning they have to carry crates of potatoes and weed or glean tomatoes and peppers. Money runs out and work is tough. Najeh and Waffeh follow opposite paths. Najeh, divorced for 12 years, is looking for a new husband to escape the authority of her brothers. Waffeh wishes to divorce from her violent husband but doesn’t know where to go with her four children. And Fatma navigates between the two, praying that things will get better and that she can retire one day. Above all, the “machtat” never stop singing. Music is what keeps them standing, what fills them with life and what gets them out of their social status, at least for the summer.

Sonia Ben Slama



Sonia Ben Slama is a Tunisian-French documentary filmmaker, born in 1985. She grew up in Paris where she studied Art and Cinema at University Paris 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 Derossier-Pouchou for the Louvre museum. In 2015, she directed her first feature documentary ‘Maktoub’, produced by Madeline Robert and Charlotte Grosse for Les films de la Caravane. ‘Maktoub’ was selected in numerous festivals, including États généraux du film documentaire of Lussas, Djerba Doc Days - Grand Jury Prize (Tunisia), Arab Film Festival (usa), Zagora Film Festival - Special Distinction from Jury (Morocco), International Documentary Festival of Khouribga - Grand Jury Prize (Morocco) ‘Machtat’ is her second feature documentary.

Elise Hug



Elise Hug studied Visual Arts, Cinéma and Documentary filmmaking. In 2014, she obtained her second master’s degree in documentary film production from Lussas documentary school, in France. The same year she joined Alter Ego Production, first as assistant, then as producer and associate of the company. This year, she is selected to participate in the international production training, Eurodoc.

Tania El Khoury



Tania El Khoury is a producer who studied filmmaking in Beirut and then moved to Paris where she obtained her master’s degree in cinema. She joined the well-established independent production company Moby Dick Films in 2005, with which she worked as legal and financial manager until 2019. Since 2016, she has been producing independently, working between France and Lebanon where she has founded the company Khamsin Films, in 2017.

Director’s Note

I met Fatma and her band when I was shooting my first documentary, ‘Maktoub’. My cousin had hired them for her wedding. They intrigued me; they were different from other women I knew in Mahdia. They looked more confident and comfortable with their bodies. Some time after this first film, I called Fatma and asked to meet them and get to know them better. I felt that with them I could go on exploring what it means to be a woman in Mahdia, what I could have been if my father didn’t choose to go to France. Through this film project ‘Machtat’, I will try to capture the contours of these women’s existence and their contradictions. They are constantly torn between their duties as women and their desires as musicians, between the freedom of summer and the monotony of winter, between their financial independence and the authority of men surrounding them. The film will follow their daily life, during the seasons that give rhythm to their year: the summer season with the weddings, the autumn season with olives picking, winter and spring with work in the fields.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Budget: **\$255,610**
Secured Financing: **\$52,139**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Ciclic
- Doha Film Institute
- Lyon Capitale tv
- Procirep-Angoa

Director / Screenwriter / Producer:
Jihan Kikhia

Producer:
Mohamed Soueid

Company Profile

Desert Power LLC is an art and film production company owned and operated by Jihan Kikhia, director, visual artist, and academic consultant. The company is embarking on its first documentary film ‘Searching for Kikhia’ (working title). Desert Power has received grants from the Doha Film Institute, International Documentary Association, The Arab Fund for Arts and Culture, Hot Docs Blue Ice Fund, and the Malmo Arab Film Festival. The company is committed to openly discovering examining the complex realms of the MENA region’s diaspora and identity through honest and introspective storytelling.

Contact:
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Desert Power LLC
info@mansurkikhia.org

Development / Feature Documentary

Searching For Kikhia (Working Title)

Libya, Lebanon, Qatar / English

Genre: **Creative Documentary**

Interests: : **Human Interest, Family, Human Rights, MENA, Politics, Identity**

A daughter unravels the disappearance of her father, the peaceful opposition leader to Qaddafi, and pieces together her mother’s 19-year search to find him.



When director Jihan Kikhia was six years old, her father disappeared. He flew to Cairo and never returned. As a result, her mother began the search for him, launching her family into a maze of complex emotions and international politics. This documentary takes the audience on a raw and reflective journey as Jihan pieces together a father she barely knew, while unravelling his politically motivated disappearance, which is shrouded in mystery until this day. Mansur Rashid Kikhia, was the former foreign minister of Libya, ambassador to the United Nations, and a human rights lawyer. In 1980, he defected from the Libyan government, becoming the peaceful opposition leader to Qaddafi’s regime. Kikhia was widely supported and unofficially crowned the next leader of Libya, but his obsessive loyalty to his country and determination to reason with his “brother” Qaddafi led to his death. In 2012, Kikhia’s body was found frozen and fully intact near Qaddafi’s palace. As the director and main character, the film is navigated from Jihan’s perspective, as she tries to understand the country that both created her father and also killed him. She approaches politics not as an external or distant subject, but as a lived experience that penetrates deeply into every human relationship—even between a little girl and her father.

Jihan Kikhia



Jihan Kikhia is a director, producer, and writer. She holds a BA in International and Comparative Politics with a concentration in Human Rights, Development, Philosophy, and International Law from the American University of Paris, and an MA from NYU’s Gallatin School of Individualized Study with a focus on art education, storytelling, and healing arts. Her body painting project & exhibit “Painted Stories, Spirited Bodies” was recognized in NYU’s Confluence online magazine, and her article “Libya, my Father, and I” was published in Kalimat Magazine: Arab Thought and Culture, 2012. Jihan is committed to sharing and discovering how the creative process can be a vehicle for freedom and empowerment.

Mohamed Soueid



Mohamed Soueid is a Lebanese writer, director and producer. He is currently the head of the documentary

department at Al Arabiya News Channel. As a director, he has directed several films and written three books. His works include ‘Postponed Cinema - Lebanese Films During the Civil War’ (Essay, 1986); ‘O Heart - A Film Autobiography on The Late Movie Theatres of Old Beirut (1996) and ‘Cabaret Souad’ (Novel, 2004). Soueid’s films include ‘Hanging Dates Under Aleppo’s Citadel’ (doc, 90’, Al Arabiya TV, 2013), ‘How Bitter My Sweet’ (doc, 90’, Al Arabiya TV, 2009), ‘Civil War’ (doc, 84’, DV, Lebanon, 2002), and ‘Tango of Yearning’ (doc, 70’, Lebanon, 1998—winner of the Best Doc Director Prize at Beirut International Film Festival in Beirut 2000).

Director’s Note

In my documentary film, ‘Searching for Kikhia’, I go through memories in real-time, trying to create a clearer picture of my father. The process of making this film is helping me understand the importance of a father figure and the impact of losing a father on a family, a community, and even a nation. As I tell the untold story of my father, I am also telling an untold story of Libya, a country still drowning in civil war and suffering from the aftermath of a 42-year long dictatorship. Some of the questions I ponder are, “How do I navigate my identity without my

father and country?” and “How much of my personal experience reflects the overall Libyan dilemma today (especially in the Libyan diaspora)?” With an unwavering desire to seek truth, even uncomfortable and dark ones, I explore Qaddafi not only as a product of Libya, but as a harsh reflection of human nature. Aside from the meddling of other nations and the tendency of power to corrupt absolutely, I ponder questions such as, “What part of Libyan society and culture created Qaddafi’s power?” and “What can be learned from the rise and fall of Qaddafi?” Using political stories to better understand our intrinsic and arcane humanity, I also explore reconciling opposites in the film: my father is considered an undisputed hero and Qaddafi an undisputed monster. However, in my attempt to more deeply connect with my father and understand his fate, I choose to see my father and Qaddafi as equally complex and human.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Budget: **\$430,645**
Secured Financing: **\$119,100**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- AFAC (The Arab Fund for Arts and Culture)
- Doha Film Institute
- Hot Docs Blue Ice
- IDA Enterprise Grant
- MAFF (Malmo Arab Film Festival)

Looking For:

- Funding
- Co-producers
- Editors
- Consultation

Qumra Projects

Work-in-Progress Feature Narrative

‘Honey Cigar’ by Kamir Aïnouz

‘The Maiden’s Pond’ by Bassem Breche

Work-in-Progress Feature Documentary

‘The Earth Doesn’t Move’ by Yosr Gasmi and Mauro Mazzocchi

‘The Labudovic Reels’ by Mila Turajlić

Director / Screenwriter:
Kamir Aïnouz

Producers:
Christine Rouxel
Marie-Castille
Mention-Schaar

Company Profile
Eliph Productions is a film and tv development and production company created in 2015 by Christine Rouxel. Eliph’s first production was Bryan Marciano’s generational series ‘Twenty-Five’, broadcast in October 2018 on ocs, which received the first prize for interpretation at the Festival Série Mania for the performance of its lead actor. Setting high production standards as a core value, both in themes addressed by its films and the originality of the director’s vision, Eliph Productions is now supporting and producing Kamir Aïnouz’s first movie, ‘Honey Cigar’. Eliph Productions is also producing David Oelhoffen’s ‘The Fourth Wall’, a powerful feature film that portrays the journey of a man who decides to set up up Anouilh’s Antigone in Beirut during the Lebanese war.

Sales Agent:
Best Friend Forever
sales@bffsales.eu

Contact:
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Eliph Productions
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Honey Cigar

Algeria, France, Belgium, Qatar / French, Berber, Arabic / 2020 / 90 mins
Genre: **Drama**
Interests: **Women’s Issues, Coming-of-Age**

The coming-of-age story of a teenage Algerian girl born and raised in France—set against the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Algeria in the 1990s.



Paris, 1993—Selma, 17, lives in a bourgeois and secular Berber family in the suburbs. When she meets Julien, a forward young man in college, she realizes for the first time how the heavy rules of the patriarchy directly affect her intimacy. She decides to resist and fight. As Selma discovers the power and dangers of her own desire, her family starts to crumble, and Islamism takes over her country of origin. Inspired by the ancient strength of her people, Selma sets out on the perilous journey to become a free woman.

Kamir Aïnouz



Born and raised in Paris of Algerian parents, Kamir Aïnouz studied screenwriting at UCLA and attended directing workshops at USC. Since 2008, she has worked as a screenwriter on feature films, including the American remake of the French comedy ‘LOL’ (2012), the biopic of Egyptian-born singer Dalida, and the adaptation of Camilla Läckberg’s bestselling Swedish novel ‘The Ice Princess’ for French studio UGC. ‘Honey Cigar’ is her first original script and her directorial debut.

Christine Rouxel



After working as an artistic director for TF1 Films Production, Christine Rouxel joined Chez Wam as a producer alongside Alain Chabat. She produced in particular ‘I do: how to get married and stay single’ by Eric Lartigau, ‘Nothing in my pockets’ by Marion Vernoux, ‘Babies’ by Thomas Balmes (out of World Focus Pictures) and ‘On the trail of Marsupilami’ by Alain Chabat. She then founded Eliph Productions and produced ‘Twenty-Five’, a series by Bryan Marciano broadcast on OCS, ‘Honey Cigar’ by Kamir Aïnouz, and is currently in pre-production of ‘Noah’s Ark’, the first feature film by Bryan Marciano, and ‘The Fourth Wall’ by David Oelhoffen.

Director’s Note

I grew up in France, in a family of highly educated Algerian immigrants. When I went back home to Algiers and Kabylia, I would see the women in my family speak their minds through their eyes, their gestures, their body language. I would see the men respond to them in that same way. Desire, even if unspoken, was everywhere. In my blood, I felt empowered to act on mine when it emerged. I felt it would be hypocritical to behave otherwise because, by essence, our Algerian culture was sensual. As adolescence hit me in Paris in the 1990s, I crashed head onto a patriarchal culture that knew no frontier. Nothing, not even my mother’s repeated warnings, prepared me for the violence of the universal domination of one gender over another. I discovered that women’s bodies were battlefields. Luckily, I came from a family of revolutionaries. With ‘Honey Cigar’, I wanted to explore the ways to break free from the hardest and, sometimes, the sweetest of chains.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Budget: **\$2,104,264**
Secured Financing: **\$1,723,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Angoa
- BFF
- CNC Aide au développement
- CNC Fonds Image de la diversité
- Doha Film Institute
- Eliph Productions
- Les Films du Fleuve
- Les Films du Mirakle
- M.D. Ciné
- Orange Studio
- Panam
- Productions du Ch’timi
- Région Ile de France
- Soficas
- Willow

Looking For:

- Financing
- Distribution
- Festivals

Director / Co-Screenwriter:
Bassem Breche

Co-screenwriter:
Ghassan Salhab

Producer:
Jana Wehbe

Company Profile

Founded in 2009, The Attic is a growing production boutique focusing on quality storytelling in all its forms. The company has been diversifying its interest and bringing productions to theatre and musical stages. The Attic has produced ‘Talej’, ‘Revoltango’, and the award-winning ‘2 1/2’. As well as the ‘Beirut Terminus’ films, the ‘Anti-personnel’ theatre play, and are currently working on ‘The Day Vladimir died’ and ‘The Maiden’s Pond’. In 2019, the company collaborated with the prestigious Baalbeck International Festival in the production of diverse music concerts. While working to bring to light films by emerging talented directors and participating vigorously in the present and future of cinema in the Middle East, The Attic is currently developing several eclectic projects.

Contact:
Jana Wehbe
The Attic
jana@theatticproductions.com

The Maiden’s Pond

‘Birket Al ’arous’ / Lebanon, Qatar / Arabic / 2020 / 120 mins
Genre: **Drama**
Interests: **Identity, Women’s Issues**

In a small Lebanese town, a mother struggles to lend support to her estranged and newly-divorced daughter, as both women come to terms with their unresolved wounds.



‘The Maiden’s Pond’ 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, and reached her peace by letting go of any attachments. But the past does not let go of Salma and brings back Thuraya—defeated, divorced, and pregnant.

Bassem Breche



Bassem Breche is an Emmy award winning scriptwriter and director. Since 2007, Breche has directed three short films—‘Both’ (2007) which premiered at Cannes’ Critics Week, ‘Ziu’ (2013) and ‘Free Range’ (2014). Breche has written a numerous amount of web series and films including, ‘Shankaboot’ (2009), ‘Fasateen’ (2012), ‘The Little Drop’ (2015), ‘Enslaved’ 2017, ‘Aleph’ (2019) and ‘Virtue’ (2020). Breche is also the founder/director of Scenario Beirut. Breche is currently working on the postproduction of his debut film ‘The Maiden’s Pond’.

Jana Wehbe



Jana Wehbe studied filmmaking at the Universite Saint Joseph in Beirut and modern oriental singing at the Lebanese National Conservatory. She has worked with renowned directors like Nadine

Labaki, Maryam Keshavarez, Joana Hadjithomas, Khalil Greige, and Wissam Charaf, among others. Jana line produced ‘Tannoura Maxi’, ‘The Lebanese Rocket Society’, ‘Tombé du Ciel’, ‘Après’, ‘Taste of Cement’, and other films premiering and selected at prestigious festivals. In 2009, Jana co-founded The Attic production boutique. She went on to produce ‘2 1/2’ winner of a FIPRESCI Award at DIFF 2010, ‘This Little Father Obsession’ premiering at Visions Du Reel and Winner of the Jury Prize at the 2016 Carthage Film Festival, ‘Talej’ (2013), ‘Revoltango’ (2014) and ‘Beirut Terminus’, Winner of the Best Non-Fiction Film Award at C1FF 2019. In 2011, Jana joined the Doha Film Institute as part of their annual festivals team. She also served as the Arab Film Institute’s representative in Lebanon. In addition to her expertise in music artist management, Wehbe recently produced the theatrical play ‘Anti-personnel’. She is currently producing ‘The Day Vladimir Died’, a short animation film nominated for the Robert Bosch Stiftung Film Prize, and in post-production of the feature fiction ‘The Maiden’s Pond’.

Director’s Note

What connects the two women of ‘The Maiden’s Pond’ is the inheritance of loss and pain, handed down through the generations despite action or rebellion. In such a context, verbal communication is impossible, apologies are not available, and forgiveness is not an option. Forgetting, ignoring and surviving might be all that is left—a lesson that goes against the grain in a present that is all too keen on resolutions, endings and moral lessons. Salma reluctantly returns to her state of motherhood, only to discover that option is not available anymore. Thuraya returns to her past in search of a trauma that might be resolved, only to discover there is nothing there. Moving forward often requires letting go of the past, aborting it, and discovering a different self—one that can provide some comfort for the time that remains.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Budget: **\$800,000**
Secured Financing: **\$506,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Act for Lebanon
- Arab Fund of Arts & Culture
- Doha Film Institute
- Dubai Film Connection – ART
- Lebanese Ministry of Culture
- Metafora Production

Looking For:

- Finishing Funds
- Sales
- Distribution
- Festivals

Director / Producer:
Yosr Gasmi
Mauro Mazzocchi

Co-Producer:
Nesrine Ben Taleb

Company Profile

The production company L'Argent was created in 2015 by a group of filmmakers that have been working together for several years. They stand for creative cinema by exploring the boundaries of documentary and fiction. Established on a framework of common concerns, approaches and experiences, the L'Argent company supports in its operations the “horizontality” of relations and projects. They emphasize the fact that films must be made according to personal perspectives, which lead to giving a different point view each time. Previous credits include: ‘Chantier A’ (2013) by Tarek Sami, Karim Loualiche and Lucie Dèche; ‘Reflux’ (2013) by Guillaume Bordier; ‘Metamorphosis’ (2015) by Nicolas Pradal and Pierre Selvini.

Contact:
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The Earth Doesn't Move

‘La terre ne se meut pas’ / Tunisia, France, Italy, Qatar / Arabic, French, Italian / 2020 / 240 mins
Genre: **Creative Documentary**
Interests: **Arthouse, Immigration**

In a reception centre for asylum seekers in Italy, we follow the destiny of three protagonists—Laly a 43-year-old from Senegal, Abderrahman a Libyan poet, and Demba a Gambian aspirant actor and director.



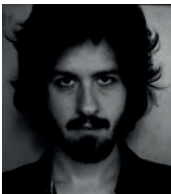
In a small village in the heart of the Italian Alps, asylum seekers are waiting for the end of a long and exhausting judicial process and hoping to get the Italian government’s response to their asylum applications. They live in an old three-star hotel converted to a reception centre for asylum seekers by its managers—an Italian family that’s also living there. Sandrio’s Prefecture supervises the place. In this mandatory waiting interval, they learn the rural and mountain reality that characterizes the North of Italy. They also discover the institutional and bureaucratic face of a Europe that “welcomes” them. Moreover, they face the disciplinary deployment keeping a constant eye over them. One day, a film crew comes to the centre to make a documentary about the building and its residents. The camera takes place under the suspicious look of the asylum seekers who are used to living with the supervision of dozens security cameras set up everywhere in the centre.

Yosr Gasmi



Yosr Gasmi is a Tunisian filmmaker, a post-graduate in French and comparative literature from Paris IV and the ENS of Tunis. A writer, actress and director, she is mainly interested in the image in its various artistic and scriptural expressions. In 2014, she and her partner Mauro Mazzocchi began their first film project ‘I Want to Be Mad, Raving Mad - L.E.N.Z.-’ (2016). This independent production has been considered by “Nawaat” as the second-best movie made between 2011 and 2017 in Tunisia. ‘The Earth Doesn’t Move’ is her second film.

Mauro Mazzocchi



Mauro Mazzocchi is an Italian director and producer who collaborated in 2014 with Yosr Gasmi on the writing, directing, editing and production of their first feature

film ‘I Want to Be Mad, Raving Mad - L.E.N.Z.-’ (2016). The two directors consider themselves as a technical and expressive multiplicity without fragmentation or hierarchy. Mauro Mazzocchi has been working since 2017 with L'Argent, a French production company. He produced their second film, ‘The Earth Doesn’t Move’, a documentary that he wrote, directed and edited with Yosr Gasmi.

Nesrine Ben Taleb



Nesrine Ben Taleb taught Entrepreneurship and Communication from 2015 to 2017 in the Canadian university stream of Tunisia “Collège Lasalle”. From 2009 until now, she has been working as a freelancer specialized in Digital and Content marketing. Her passion for writing, aesthetics and cinema brought her to the cinematographic production profession, especially in the Arab and African world. In 2017, she joined the production team of ‘The Earth Doesn’t Move’ written and produced by Yosr Gasmi and Mauro Mazzocchi.

Director's Note

‘The Earth Doesn’t Move’ questions the migration laws in a world that denies the reality of the movement. Domination mechanisms in society, each political, institutional or those related to the media, emerge from the unbearable wait of asylum seekers living in a reception center in Italy. In this environment that seems like a prison, we wanted to address the constantly-supervised people’s reality by trying to catch this strange temporality based on the unlimited wait and the cyclical repetition and also by questioning the presence of our camera. Moreover, we are also looking for other means of expression above the ordinary use of language. The traumatic memory of the crossing and also the movement desire haunting the protagonists’ contrast with the mandatory wait. The documentary tends to illustrate the outlines of this invisible and missed image—the image of the Earth turning around. The documentary is shot in black and white. It is an intentional bias; in order to penetrate the real, we had to create a distance from it. Moreover, black and white highlights an essential distance with some media’s approach.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Budget: **\$122,331**
Secured Financing: **\$76,686**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Doha Film Institute
- L'Argent (France)
- Private Funding
- Takmil program (The Carthage Film Festival, Tunisia)

Looking For:

- Distribution
- Festivals
- Financing
- Sales

Director / Producer:
Mila Turajlić

Producers:
Mila Turajlić
Carine Chichkowsky

Company Profile

The Belgrade-based production company, Dribbling Pictures, specialises creative documentary film production. Created by Boris Mitic and Mila Turajlić in 2006, our films have been released in cinemas in six countries, broadcast by over 20 international channels, and shown at over 250 festivals, where they have won a total of 45 awards. Survivance has established its name in art-house cinema by producing both documentaries and fiction films, while also distributing rare films theatrically and on DVD. From the outset focused on supporting international as well as French talent, Survivance films premiered at the Berlinale, Locarno, Toronto, Rotterdam and key documentary festivals. ‘The Other Side of Everything’ by Mila Turajlić is one of its most recent coproductions.

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Mila Turajlić
Dribbling Pictures
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The Labudovic Reels

Serbia, France, Qatar, Montenegro, Croatia / Serbo-Croatian, English, French, Arabic / 2020 / 100 mins
Genre: **Documentary**
Interests: **History, Politics**

Stevan Labudovic, the cameraman of Yugoslav President Tito, takes us on an archival road trip through the birth of the Non-Aligned Movement. Revealing his role in filming the Algerian revolution, he plunges us into the heart of an epic battle of images in which cinema gave voice to a decolonising world.



In an unexplored vault in Belgrade, the capital of the former Yugoslavia, lies a collection of films known as “The Labudovic reels”. On them are images of African and Asian liberation movements of the 60s and 70s. How is it that the images of these revolutions lie on another continent, forgotten in a film archive? The answer to this question takes us into the story behind the images told by the man who filmed them. Stevan Labudovic was assigned at the age of 27 to be the cameraman of Yugoslav president Tito. For more than two decades he filmed Tito’s visits to newly-independent countries. From Mali to Indonesia and the halls of the United Nations, Labudovic’s camera captured an era of politics, personality and promise. Sent on a mission by Tito to support the Algerian war of independence by providing them with images of their struggle, Stevan would play a key role in the information battle against colonial powers. The Labudovic Reels takes us on an intimate voyage through a life dedicated to the filmed image. Through the friendship that develops with the young director, the question of the role of the camera in defining a political moment comes to the fore.

Mila Turajlić



Mila Turajlić is a documentary filmmaker, visual artist and archive scholar born in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Her films have screened at Toronto, Venice and Tribeca and her video installations were commissioned by international museums. Her most recent film ‘The Other Side of Everything’ was HBO Europe’s first co-production with Serbia and won 30 awards including the prestigious IDFA Award for Best Documentary Film in 2017, as well as the Grand Prix for Best historical documentary released in France in 2018. Mila’s debut feature doc, ‘Cinema Komunista’ played at over 100 festivals and won 16 awards including the Gold Hugo and the FOCAL Award for Creative Use of Archival Footage in 2011. Her latest work is a series of archive-based video installations commissioned by MoMA in New York for their landmark exhibition on Yugoslav modernist architecture in 2018.

Carine Chichkowsky



Carine Chichkowsky founded Survivance with Guillaume Morel in 2010. The two were bound by a common desire for “another” cinema, one that does not respond in an overwhelming way to what the market would like to sell to us, but that speaks to those who wish to see it. She has produced or co-produced approximately 15 films, which have screened at the Berlinale, Toronto, Rotterdam, and other key documentary festivals. ‘The Labudovic Reels’ is her second collaboration with Mila Turajlic after ‘The Other Side of Everything’ (2017). She is an alumnus of EURODOC and EAVE, and teaches documentary producing workshops at the documentary workshop of La Femis, University Paris 8, University Paris 10 and the Documentary School of Lussas.

Director’s Note

It is very rare to have an opportunity to make an archive-based documentary where the main character is the person who actually filmed that archive. For me, this determines the style of the film, giving us an opportunity to “re-vision” those images, bringing Stevan Labudovic to watch and comment on what he filmed and why. Thus, the dramatic structure of the film builds on an exploration of the political use of the cinematic image. The emotional core of the film is the evolving relationship between Stevan and myself. During our filming, in Belgrade, and while travelling to Algeria, he began to give me pointers on what to shoot with a bit of friendly sarcasm. At the same time, our conversations deepened my dedication to filmmaking as a political struggle. From questions of history and solidarity that open the film, we progress to more personal considerations of the legacy of a life dedicated to cinema.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Budget: **€621,161**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Arte ZDF
- CNC
- Creative Europe MEDIA Development
- Doha Film Institute
- Eurimages
- Film Center Serbia
- HAVC
- Montenegro Film Center

Qumra Projects

Picture Lock Feature Narrative

‘**Liborio**’ by Fernando Martinez Sosa

‘**Noche De Fuego**’ by Tatiana Huezo

‘**Streams**’ by Mehdi Hmili

‘**The Translator**’ by Rana Kazkaz and Anas Khalaf

‘**The Winter Within**’ by Aamir Bashir

Picture Lock Feature Documentary

‘**After a Revolution**’ by Giovanni Buccomino

‘**School of Hope**’ by Mohamed El Aboudi

‘**Their Algeria**’ by Lina Soualem

‘**Wake Up on Mars**’ by Dea Gjinozici

Director / Screenwriter:
Fernando Martinez Sosa

Co-screenwriter:
Pablo Arellano

Producer:
Fernando Santos Díaz

Company Profile
Balsie Guanabana Macuto is focused on projects that deal with social issues with an artistic sensibility. The company aims to produce high-quality auteur films, while maintaining the goal of reaching a general interest.

Contact:
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Balsie Guanabana Macuto
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Liborio

Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Qatar / Spanish / 2020 / 97 mins
Genre: **Drama**
Interests: **Social issues**

Liborio is a Dominican peasant who disappears in a hurricane and returns as a prophet, understanding that the best way to help the people is to keep them together. He cures the sick and offers food for the body and soul. His community grows until something changes—the country is invaded by the us Marines.



Liborio is a peasant who gets lost in a hurricane and takes shelter in a cave. When his township considers him dead, he is found by his son. Awaken, Liborio says he’s been given a mission: to bring the good and take away the evil. He begins to cure the sick, to speak the truth and teach by example. People begin to congregate by his side. He moves to the mountains to have total freedom and develop his dream of an independent community. Local authorities offer him weapons in exchange for his loyalty to side with them in the case of political unrest. The us Marines invade the country and want to disarm and disband the community. Liborio wants to avoid a confrontation but knows they can’t run forever.

Fernando Martinez Sosa



Fernando (Nino) Martinez Sosa, graduated as a film editor from the EICTV of San Antonio de Los Baños Cuba, later assuming the coordination of the editing department of the school. Then, he moved to Spain where he began a career as an editor working in several awarded and nominated feature films and documentaries such as—’The Hours of the Day’, ’Solitary Fragments’, and ’Me Too’. He has also taught classes, lectures and conferences in several film schools and art centres. As a director, he approached the Dominican Immigration to the usa in his documentary ’Nena’s Window’. ’Liborio’ is his first feature film.

Fernando Santos Díaz



Fernando Santos Díaz is a Dominican film producer, born in 1980. After finishing his degree in economics, he studied film production in Universidad del Cine de Buenos Aires. He aims to produce films that emphasize an authorial perspective, ancestral themes and development of new narratives that question Latin American aesthetics. His first feature produced was the acclaimed ’Cocote’ (2017), winner at its world premiere in Locarno, then presented at Toronto, San Sebastian, Rotterdam and more than 40 international film festivals.

Director’s Note

Liborio is a question. An excuse to approach a magical place and the people who inhabit it, and an attempt to preserve some fragments of their fragile way of life. Liborio is also a peculiar character in our history. A person that some people see as a Messiah, but others see as a symbol of our cultural backwardness. I don’t try to understand or judge their faith, but to show the sincerity of how they live it. That’s why all the songs and rituals are made by real followers of the historic Liborio. The movie is structured in seven episodes, each one narrated by a different character that is related to the central one. It is an exploration of the oceanic feeling, that makes us feel we are part of something bigger than ourselves and allows us to see the community as a place of empathy and tolerance. To me, that’s Liborio’s greatest teaching.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Budget: **\$900,000**
Secured Financing: **\$850,000**

- Confirmed Financial Partners:
- Bhd Bank
 - Doha Film Institute
 - Fonprocine (dr Film Commission)
 - Programa Ibermedia

- Looking For:
- Festivals
 - Sales
 - Distribution

Director / Screenwriter :
Tatiana Huezo

Producers:
Nicolás Celis
Jim Stark

Company Profile

Based in Mexico City, Pimienta Films was founded in 2008 by brothers Nicolás and Sebastián Celis as an independent production company. Its primary activity is the production of fiction and documentary feature films that portray their author’s perspectives, artistically and creatively. Pimienta’s projects have been acclaimed by critics and welcomed by national and international audiences thanks to their artistic quality and unique vision. The company has worked with renowned directors such as Alfonso Cuarón, Amat Escalante, Ciro Guerra, Cristina Gallego, Jonás Cuarón, Tatiana Huezo, Elisa Miller, James Franco and Rafi Pitts, among others, while also gaining a reputation for promoting new national talent.

Contact:
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Sales Agent:
The Match Factory
Thania Dimitrakopoulou
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Picture Lock / Feature Narrative

Noche De Fuego

Mexico, Germany, Brazil, Qatar / Spanish / 2020 / 102 mins
Genre:**Drama**
Interests: **Coming-of-Age**

Life in a war-torn town, seen through the eyes of three young girls on the path to adolescence.



In a mountain town, where corn and poppies grow, the girls sport boyish haircuts and have hiding places underground to escape the threat of being stolen. Ana and her two best friends grow up together, affirming the bonds of their friendship and discovering what it means to be a woman in a rural town marked by violence. Their mothers train them to flee death, to escape those who turn them into slaves or ghosts. They create their own impenetrable universe, but one day, one of the girls doesn’t make it to her hiding place in time.

Tatiana Huezo



Mexican-Salvadoran filmmaker Tatiana Huezo graduated from Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica and has a Masters’ Degree in Documental de Creación from the Universidad Pompeu Fabra. She gained an international reputation with her first feature documentary, ‘The Tiniest Place’ (2011). Her second documentary, ‘Tempestad’ (2016) premiered at the 66th Berlinale in the Forum Section and went on to participate in 100 festivals. It was also the Mexican entry for the Oscars and Goya awards in 2017, later receiving the nomination at the Goya Awards for best Iberoamerican film. Currently, she is in post-production on ‘Noche de Fuego’, her first fiction film.

Nicolás Celis



Nicolás Celis, founder of Pimienta Films, is a Mexican producer who has gained a reputation for working on original and meaningful projects. His production company Pimienta Films was named one of the three best production houses in Mexico by the prestigious magazine Variety. Nicolás has collaborated with renowned directors such as Tatiana Huezo, Elisa Miller, Paz Fábrega, Jonás Cuarón and Amat Escalante. Among his recent projects is ‘Roma’ (2018) by director Alfonso Cuarón, which received over 200 prizes, including the Golden Lion for Best Feature at the 75th Venice Film Festival, four BAFTA awards, two Golden Globes and three Academy Awards®. Another recent project was ‘Birds of Passage’ (2018) directed by Ciro Guerra and Cristina Gallego, which featured at the 71st Cannes Film Festival Directors’ Fortnight. Nicolás has also worked to support the forthcoming generations of producers and distributors. He frequently gives workshops and masterclasses in Mexico and abroad.

Director’s Note

My need to tell this story was influenced by the fact that I am the mother of a child who is growing and beginning to experience the painful parts of life. This stage of life, along with the violence in Mexico, informed the world I created in ‘Noche de Fuego’. The project presented a valuable opportunity to develop these themes while exploring my own reality. In Jennifer Clement’s novel, I found that the characters became perfect repositories for my personal search. The story is set in a rural area marked by poppy cultivation. The ambiguous presence of narco-traffickers and armed forces inflicts a constant psychological assault on the community. In this context, the feminine condition is more exposed to brutality. ‘Noche de Fuego’ is a story that invokes the resistance of children, of their magic and honest gaze in the face of a violent reality.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Budget: **\$2,442,435**
Secured Financing: **\$2,395,720**

- Confirmed Financial Partners:
- Bord Cadre Films SARL
 - Cactus Film and Video S. de R.L. de C.V.
 - Cinereach
 - Doha Film Institute
 - Eficine (Mexico)
 - Gabriel Figueroa Fund Los Cabos International Film Festival
 - Giorgio Blasi
 - James Howard Stark
 - Nicolas Celis

- Pimienta Films
- sFFilm Rainin Grant
- Starksales Inc.
- Sundance Institute
- Tatiana Huezo
- sFFilm Rainin Grant
- Starksales Inc.
- Sundance Institute
- Tatiana Huezo

Looking For:

- Gap Financing

Director / Screenwriter :
Mehdi Hmili

Producers:
Moufida Fedhila

Company Profile

Yol Film House is an independent Tunisian film production company that develops and produces original and innovative projects short and feature-length films selected and awarded in numerous festivals around the world. Our vision is to tell original and moving stories that provide a refreshing challenge for an international audience. The company plays an active role in supporting Tunisian and international talents with strong potential for international co-production and distribution. Our films were part of several international film festivals such as Cannes, Sydney, Milan, Clermont-Ferrand, Montréal, Paris, Los Angeles, Sarasota, and Cape Town. We produce films with a strong international experience, both artistic and financial, and an extensive network in the industry and in festivals. From our upcoming projects, ‘Streams’ is the second feature film of acclaimed young Tunisian filmmaker Mehdi Hmili.

Contact:
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Streams

Tunisia, France, Luxembourg, Qatar / Arabic / 2020 / 100 mins
Genre: **Drama**
Interests: **Social Issues, Family**

Amel is released from prison after an illicit affair. In the lower depths of Tunis, she looks for her missing son Moumen. During her journey, Amel faces a Tunisian society in almost total collapse.



Amel works in a factory in Tunis. She lives with her alcoholic husband Tahar, a former local football player, and their only son Moumen, a talented teenage football goalkeeper. To convince the boss of the factory to provide her with connections for her son, Amel betrays her fellow workers, who have been organizing a strike. Amel meets the connection—Imed, a wealthy businessman, who takes advantage of the situation and abuses Amel. She surrenders to his advances in order to offer her son the opportunity of a lifetime. But the police catch them, and Amel is imprisoned, accused of adultery and prostitution. Moumen is destroyed by the scandal and becomes violent, stops his football career and starts drinking and taking drugs. After her release, she searches for Moumen in the lower and violent streets of Tunis. In this long quest for her missing son, Amel has to face the deteriorating Tunisian society.

Mehdi Hmili



Mehdi Hmili is a filmmaker, screenwriter and producer. He was born in Tunis and graduated from the Paris

Film School. While in France, he directed his trilogy in black-and-white about love and exile—‘X-Moment’ (2009), ‘Li-La’ (2011) and ‘The Night of Badr’ (2012). His first feature-length film, ‘Thala Mon Amour’ (2016), was selected in worldwide film festivals and won several prizes, among them the Best Original Screenplay and the Best Actress Award at Oujda film Festival. His last documentary film ‘Fouledh’ selected in La Fabrique Cinema at the 72nd Cannes Film Festival won several development prizes such as the El Gouna Film Festival award. A former football player, Hmili recounts his own story in ‘Streams’ his second feature-length film currently in post-production. Mehdi Hmili is also a Torino Film Lab Alumni, and lives and works between Paris and Tunis.

Moufida Fedhila



Moufida Fedhila is a Tunisian producer and filmmaker. She co-founded Yol Film House and produced

several award-winning fiction and documentary that have been selected in worldwide film festivals and several production forums such as Cannes Film Festival, Durban FilmMart, Cinelink of Sarajevo Film Festival, Berlinale Talent, Atelier Produire Au Sud of 3 Continents Film Festival, and Producers Network of Carthage Film Festival. Her latest film ‘Aya’ is a co-production between Tunisia, France and Qatar had international success and a brilliant career. It won several awards in worldwide film festivals and was selected in more than 150 film festivals such as NewFilmmakers Los Angeles in partnership with The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (Oscars). At the 34th Vues d’Afrique International Film Festival in Montreal, she received a tribute for her work. She lives and works between Tunis and Paris.

Director’s Note

‘Streams’ is the interweaving of three themes that have always haunted me—family, guilt and love. Through them, I try to describe and translate into an economy of words and gestures, the complexity of the existence of a family. This film is the uncompromising portrait of a society that cannot get rid of the demons of the past—a society in full collapse. The context of the Tunisian post-revolutionary society shows how much corruption has developed, violence has spread, and obscurantism and criminality have seized the minds of individuals. This shows how society has failed. It has eradicated all the youth of the popular neighbourhoods and suburbs that took the bullets of the regime of Ben Ali. This youth finds refuge in violence and religious fanaticism. Despite the change and aspirations of the revolution, the social context has not changed much. Football remains the only way for young people from the working class to emancipate themselves and succeed. This desire for success, this desire for social ascension triggered the tragic events of this narrative.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Budget: **\$795,000**
Secured Financing: **\$643,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Luxembourg Film Fund
- CNC, France
- Doha Film Institute
- Yol Film House (Tunisia)
- Tarantula (Luxembourg)
- MPM Film (France)
- Clandestino Production (Tunisia)
- Tunisian Ministry of Culture

Looking For:

- Sales Agent
- Distributors
- Festivals
- VOD Platform
- Broadcasters

Directors:
Rana Kazkaz
Anas Khalaf

Screenwriters:
Rana Kazkaz
Magali Negroni

Producers:
Anas Khalaf
Nicolas Leprêtre
Raphaël Alexandre

Company Profile
Paris-based Georges Films was founded in 2015 by Nicolas Leprêtre and Raphaël Alexandre. The company is dedicated to producing and co-producing international feature films and shorts, and to discovering and nurturing new and experienced directors from around the world. They produced ‘Mare Nostrum’, a short film shot in Jordan, by Syrian directors Rana Kazkaz and Anas Khalaf, which was selected in over 100 festivals, including Sundance and Dubai, and has won 35 international prizes. Their other shorts include ‘Malik’ (2018) by Nathan Carli which garnered over 50 festival selections and 11 prizes and ‘Love U Hiroshima’ by Jules-César Bréchet to be released in 2020. In 2019 they produced Rana Kazkaz and Anas Khalaf’s debut feature film, ‘The Translator’, which is a DFF grantee and laureate of the best project in development at the Atelier de la Cinéfondation - Cannes 2017. They’re currently co-producing with The Imaginarium Films, “Inshallah a boy” from the Jordanian director, Amjad Al Rasheed and are financing ‘Wadi Rum, Victoire contre le desert’ from the French Academy Cesar and BAFTA awarded French director Patrice Leconte.

Contact:
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Georges Films
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Sales Agent :
Yohann Comte
Charades
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The Translator

Syria, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Qatar / Arabic, English /
2020 / 105 mins
Genre: **Drama, Thriller**
Interests: **Politics, War**

March, 2011. As the Syrian Revolution begins, a political refugee returns illegally to Syria and risks everything to free his brother from the Assad regime.



Having gotten into trouble with the Syrian government, Sami has been living for years as a political refugee in Australia, working as an Arabic-English translator. And although he has adapted well to his new life, he is haunted by feelings of guilt for having abandoned his brother and sister. In 2011, the Syrian revolution starts unexpectedly, and Sami receives a video of his brother being arrested for peacefully demonstrating. The horrifying event brings up painful memories of when their father was similarly arrested by the regime thirty years earlier. Seizing this moment as a way to make up for the past, Sami makes the dangerous journey back to Syria in order to find his brother. Once there, Sami becomes increasingly aware of his responsibility towards his country and family, leading him just like his father and brother did—to risk everything for freedom.

Rana Kazkaz



Rana Kazkaz, a Syrian-American, currently lives with her family in Doha, having left Damascus as a result of the ongoing Syrian conflict. Kazkaz holds an MFA in Acting from Carnegie Mellon University/Moscow Art Theatre and attended the Directing Workshop for Women at the American Film Institute. She is the writer and director of four short films including ‘Mare Nostrum’ (2016). In addition to developing other feature films, Rana is Assistant Professor in Residence at Northwestern University in Qatar where she teaches filmmaking.

Anas Khalaf



Anas Khalaf is a Syrian-French filmmaker who currently lives in Doha, having left Damascus with his family as a result of the Syrian conflict. He holds a BA from the Normandy Business School, and with his wife, Rana Kazkaz,

co-founded the production company Synéastes Films in 2010. He is the director of three short films, including ‘Mare Nostrum’ (2016), which has been selected in over 100 festivals, including Sundance and Dubai, and has won 35 international prizes. He also works as an actor, having played roles in ‘Dégradé’ (2015), ‘With Premeditation’ (2014) and the television series ‘The Bureau’ (2015-).

Nicolas Leprêtre



Nicolas Leprêtre has worked in the film industry for 15 years, as a producer and line producer for feature films and shorts. He founded Georges Films in 2015, with Raphaël Alexandre. He has worked on over 20 feature films and produced 13 shorts, including ‘La vie Parisienne’ by Vincent Dietschy and ‘A Whore and a Chick’ by Clément Michel, both nominated to the French Academy César, and ‘Mare Nostrum’ by Syrian directors Rana Kazkaz and Anas Khalaf, which was selected in over 100 festivals. ‘The Translator’, awarded at the Atelier de la Cinéfondation - Cannes 2017, is his first feature film as a producer.

Director’s Note

We were living in Damascus with our two small children when the Syrian Revolution broke out in March of 2011. It is during that period that our film takes place, a moment when everything was possible—when Syrians believed, as with the other Arab revolutions, that the moment of emancipation and democracy was within reach. Violence, however, quickly took precedence over hope, and suspicion won minds over. Like Sami, the main character in ‘The Translator’, we are questioning our responsibility and culpability towards the situation in Syria. Like us, Sami has fled, uprooted himself, to live in freedom, but he cannot resolve that his country, Syria, and his people cannot share it.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Budget: **\$1,854,038**
Secured Financing: **\$1,778,294**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Ad Vitam Distribution
- Arte France
- Arte France Cinema
- Artemis Production
- Cactus World Films
- Charades
- Cineforum
- CMA
- Doha Film Institute
- Georges Films
- Office Fédéral de la Culture
- Proximus
- RTS
- Tax Shelter
- Tip’images Production

Looking For:

- Grants
- Gap Financing
- Distributors

Director / Screenwriter / Producer:
Aamir Bashir

Producer:
Shanker Raman

Company Profile

Sangbaaz Films is a production company based in Mumbai and founded by the director Aamir Bashir, and director of photography, Shanker Raman. ‘The Winter Within’ is the company’s first feature film.

Contact:
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Acrobates Films
info@acrobatesfilms.fr

The Winter Within

‘Maagh’ / India, France, Qatar / Bakarwali, Hindi, Kashmiri, Urdu
/ 2020 / 98 mins
Genre: **Drama**
Interests: **Drama**

Nargis finds herself at the crossroads of a new beginning with Yaseen. Just then, her husband returns.



In Srinagar, Kashmir, Nargis works as a domestic helper for a middle-class family. Her husband, Manzoor, has disappeared after joining the armed rebellion against the Indian State. When her employer discovers that Nargis’ husband is a militant, she is fired from her job and is left with no choice but to return to her village. There, Nargis weaves the shawl that Manzoor had begun, in the hope that he will return. Yaseen, a handicrafts trader, supports Nargis by giving her work. And as an admirer, the possibility of a new beginning. One day Manzoor reappears. Captured and tortured in detention, he is a shadow of his former self. Nargis devotes herself to rehabilitating Manzoor back to health even as he battles his demons. Although released, he has to report to the nearest army camp. One day, he makes an unscheduled visit to the camp, which will have devastating consequences.

Aamir Bashir



Aamir Bashir
Born in Srinagar, Kashmir, Aamir Bashir is a professional actor and filmmaker based in Mumbai,

India. After his schooling in Kashmir, Aamir graduated in History from St. Stephen’s College, Delhi and went on to read Law at the University of Delhi. After working in television as a news correspondent and a travel show host, Aamir moved to Mumbai in 1998 to pursue a career in acting, with several credits in independent as well as mainstream films to his name. ‘Harud’ (Autumn) was his maiden venture as a writer, director and producer. ‘Harud’ won the Don Quixote Award at the Fribourg International Film Festival 2011 and the prestigious National Award for Best Film in Urdu in 2013. Aamir Bashir is currently working on postproduction of ‘Maagh’ (The Winter Within).

Shanker Raman



Shanker Raman is an award-winning cinematographer based in Mumbai. A graduate from the Film

and tv Institute of India, Pune, he has collaborated closely on several documentaries, shorts, feature films and tv commercials. Known for his profoundly immersive approach to filmmaking, he has also co-written and co-produced independent films like ‘Frozen’ and ‘Harud’(Autumn) that have world premiered at TIFF. Shanker Raman directed his first feature ‘Gurgaon’ which won the best project at the NFDC Work in Progress lab 2015. ‘Maagh’ (The Winter Within) is his second collaboration with director Aamir Bashir.

Director’s Note

In the last three decades, approximately eight to ten thousand cases of enforced disappearances have occurred in Kashmir. Mostly young men picked up by the Indian security forces, never to return home. Until now, more than six thousand unmarked graves have been discovered in Kashmir. The relatives of the disappeared persons believe that their loved ones may be buried in these graves, but the State refuses to conduct DNA tests to identify the bodies. These unmarked graves form the backdrop of the film which explores torture, both mental and physical and its horrific consequences. Nargis, the moral centre of the film, like Penelope in Homer’s Odyssey, weaves for survival in the time of war, and in the hope of her militant husband, Manzoor’s return. But unlike the Odyssey, Manzoor’s return is anything but triumphant. He is a shadow of his former self, having undergone torture in detention. ‘Maagh’ (The Winter Within) is a tragic tale of Kashmiris’ struggle for self-determination, and freedom from state oppression. An oppression that is ripping apart the social fabric, under which, it is Nargis, a woman—who shows a greater commitment to the ideas of justice and freedom.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Budget: **\$425,463**
Secured Financing: **\$354,463**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Acrobates Films
- Doha Film Institute
- Région Ile-de-France
- Sangbaaz Films

Looking For:

- Funding

Director / Screenwriter :
Giovanni Buccomino

Producers:
Naziha Arebi, Alessandro Carolli

Company Profile

Co-founded by Giovanni Buccomino and Naziha Arebi, Bad Donkey Films develop character-driven cinema, that provokes, while also revealing an alternative narrative and intimate access into stories of conflict. Films include the award-winning and BAFTA-nominated ‘Freedom Fields’, and the Sundance/Tribeca/FOV/ DFI/ Rai Cinema supported ‘After a Revolution’, which is currently in post-production. Naziha is also developing a hybrid fiction film, and Giovanni is working on a mid-length for The Guardian Shorts. He also develops sound design for both fiction and documentary.

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Bad Donkey Films
naziha.arebi@gmail.com

After a Revolution

UK, Italy, Libya, USA, Canada, Qatar / Arabic / 2020 / 120 mins
Genre: **Creative Documentary**
Interests: **Social Issues, War, Children, Women’s Issues**

An intimate story of a brother and sister who fought on opposite sides of the Libyan revolution. Formally civilians, now militarized, they remain separated by ideologies but bound by their love of the family and the love of country as they attempts to rebuild their lives after a revolution.



Filmed over six years, ‘After A Revolution’ is the challenging story of a brother and sister struggling to rebuild their lives after fighting on opposite sides of the Libyan revolution. Separated by their ideologies but bound by the love of family, and the love of their country, they attempt to rebuild their lives from the wreckage, devoured by trauma yet never giving up. Their epic, complex journey reveals at close range the psychological repercussions of conflict, modern-day intervention and proxy wars, yet at its core—it’s a story of family and survival.

Giovanni Buccomino



Giovanni Buccomino gained his Master's in History and Philosophy at the University of Rome. While studying, Giovanni worked as a sound engineer in music and later moved into sound design and making sound work for Criterion Collection, Arte, Sky Arts, Rai, and Discovery Channel. In 2010 he directed his first feature, ‘The Valley of the Moon’, selected at festivals like Festival dei Popoli and Hot Docs and winner of the Jury prize at the Village Doc Festival in Milan, Italy. In 2011 Giovanni directed tv hour ‘Yanqul’ for the 10th Anniversary of 9/11 and a film on Libya’s Tabu ethnic group for Al Jazeera. Giovanni continues working as a sound designer and field recordist as well as directing his own films. Co-founder of Bad Donkey Films, Giovanni is also a Sundance Lab fellow, was an Executive Producer and Sound Designer on Libyan feature doc ‘Freedom Fields’ and is currently working on his feature film ‘After a Revolution’.

Naziha Arebi



Naziha Arebi is a BAFTA-nominated British-Libyan artist and filmmaker. Coming from a theatre background, Naziha returned to Libya during the revolution to work and explore her father’s homeland. In 2012 she co-founded HuNa Productions, a Tripoli-based production collective, working at the intersection between art and activism, creating films around identity, gender and reconciliation with BBC, Al Jazeera, Hivos, Oxfam, UN Women and NGO’s, as well as a tv hr on the Tabu tribe of Libya for Al Jazeera and a 24min on Salwa Bughaighis. Naziha is a HotDocs Blue Ice and a Sundance Lab fellow, a WEF Global Shaper, a member of Lumiere D’Afrique and co-founder of Bad Donkey Films. She also works as a cinematographer in the MENA region, and her artwork has been published extensively in print and exhibited globally. Alongside her award-winning feature ‘Freedom Fields’ (world premiered TIFF, LFF, IDFA, CPHDOX and opening film of Ajyal 2018), she is also producing Giovanni Buccomino’s feature film ‘After a Revolution’ and working on her first hybrid fiction feature film.

Director’s Note

We have gotten used to seeing war, uprisings, interventions, and revolutions through news reports, social media and films of activism. But once the media leave the frontline, once the UN missions pack up and go home and the foreign embassies flee, what then, what’s left? I’m interested in what happens to the “losers” as well as the “winners” of war, when a whole nation is in the grips of PTSD. How do people start to rebuild their lives and their country amidst the chaos? Haunted by death, trauma and trying to hold a family together, I ask myself how I would behave in their shoes. Our protagonists and their families live the repercussions of a modern-day “revolution” and its impact. Those that once were civilians, are changed forever, caught between their choices and their consequences. This is a film about Libya, epic in scale, challenging and nuanced in its approach, but ultimately it’s an intimate film about family—a family both divided by their political values, but bound by the love of the homeland, and the love of the family, and constantly pulled between the two. Stylistically I’m interested in the blur between fiction and documentary and am compelled by stories that unfold in front of the lens and challenge the extremities of the human condition.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Budget: **\$595,626.11**
Secured Financing: **\$305,950.02**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Doha Film Institute
- Field of Vision
- Gucci Tribeca
- Piemonte Region Doc Film Fund
- RAI Cinema
- Sundance Institute

Looking For:

- Finishing Funds
- Festivals
- Sales
- Distributors

Director / Screenwriter :
Mohamed El Aboudi

Producers:
Pertti Veijalainen
Hind Saih
Lamia Chraibi

Company Profile

Bellota Films is an independent production company, founded in 2009 by Hind Saih and Dominique Barneaud, both of whom have a strong desire to create. With 20 years of production experience in France and abroad, we place innovative writing and procedures at the heart of our activity. Our films are passionate and motivated by the desire to share unique and surprising insights into the contemporary world and reality. At the heart of our activity is a selection of projects for television and cinema, whose writing is sometimes combined with animation, graphic arts or multimedia. Our core business is documentary, but we also develop works of fiction and feature films.

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Bellota Films
francois@bellotafilms.fr

School of Hope

Morocco, Finland, France, USA, Qatar / Arabic / 2020 / 90 mins
Genre: **Creative Documentary**
Interests: **Politics, Environmental & Social Issues, Youth, Identity, Tradition**

‘School of Hope’ tells the story of a nomad tribe struggling to get education for their children, and a young teacher trying to help them while suffering himself under the government’s indifference toward rural regions.



Climate change and overgrazing have brought poverty to the nomad tribes of the High Plateau of Atlas in Morocco. The Dehbi tribe is one of the oldest and last tribes left. Their ancestral way of life has been significantly tested by a decade-long drought and can no longer provide them with a living income. Now faced with the necessity to settle down, they feel more lost than when wandering with their cattle in the endless desert. Education becomes an essential struggle that also divides the community. To let a child go to school is to deprive oneself of a precious workforce. It might seem that there is not much hope for the children of the ‘School of Hope’, but the Dehbi are determined not to give up fighting.

Mohamed El Aboudi



Mohamed El Aboudi was born and brought up in Morocco. He graduated from the University of Fes, Morocco with a BA in Theatre in 1991 and with an MA in Film & Television at Bond University, Australia in 1997. In his work, Mohamed has been interested in strong human stories. He has made documentaries about asylum seekers, mothers of immigrants, artists, and a girl with Down Syndrome. His latest films explore the theme of becoming an outsider in your own society. Mohamed’s documentaries have been shown at various film festivals all over the world.

Hind Saih



Hind Saih founded Bellota Films in 2009 to produce creative films. Born and raised in Morocco, she emigrated to France after her High School diploma, and earned a PhD Degree in Cinema. She joined Play Film in 1999, an independent production and distribution company based in Paris, where she worked as head of international distribution for three years. In 10 years, Hind has produced approximately 30 hours of documentary film on various topics, experimenting with new aesthetics and narrative, while sharing a strong vision about contemporary society.

Director’s Note

While I was making my previous film, ‘Dance of Outlaws’ (Häätänsi), I realized how a lack of education is at the root of many problems in society. It makes people unaware of their rights, unable to deal with the bureaucracy—it blocks their chances of pursuing a better future. I wanted to explore this theme further, and so I travelled to see the life of the nomadic tribes, who occupy the arid highlands of Eastern Morocco, unfolding in an area of almost 26,000 square kilometres, lie people forgotten and ignored by the society. For these nomads, building a private school is one small way to fight the powerful system that is trying to eliminate their voice. But the road to a better future is like the land where the nomads live, full of hard rocks and thorny bushes.

Director / Screenwriter :
Lina Soualem

Producer:
Marie Balducchi

Company Profile

AGAT Films / EX NIHILO is a collective of 8 associate producers that combines the individual work of developing, producing and promoting the filmmakers’ works with a collective approach based on financial, editorial and human unity between the producers. The company produces both cinema and television, fiction and documentary and is well-established thanks to great successes.

Contact:
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AGAT Films / EX NIHILO
marie.balducchi@agatfilms.com

Lina Soualem
linasoualem@gmail.com

Their Algeria

‘Leur Algérie’ / France, Algeria, Switzerland, Qatar / Arabic, French
/ 2020 / 70 mins
Genre: **Documentary**
Interests: **Creative Documentary**

The longstanding journey of exile of my grandparents Aïcha and Mabrouk: a couple of Algerian immigrants living in France for sixty years, whose lives were a succession of separations and silences.



After 62 years of living together, Aïcha and Mabrouk, my grandparents, are separating. They now live in two separate buildings, facing each other. I didn’t understand their separation. No one explained it to me. I don’t know their story. No one told it to me. Their silence troubled me. Aïcha and Mabrouk got married in 1952, in the village of Laouamer in Algeria, without knowing each other. Two years later, they settled in Thiers, a medieval French town where they have been living for over 60 years. Mabrouk worked his entire life as a polisher in a knife-making factory. Aïcha followed a husband she did not know and started a family with him. As I try to understand their separation, it leads me back to Algeria and to the silence that exile has imposed on two generations, my father’s and mine. I discover the persistent suffering of their uprooting. An uprooting they can’t describe. With them, and with the help of my father Zinedine, I’m off to search for this story of exile, of bonds that are unmade, of suffering and pride—which profoundly affected my grandparents and an entire generation of Algerians who immigrated to France.

Lina Soualem



Lina Soualem is a French-Palestinian-Algerian filmmaker and actress. After studying History and Political Science at La Sorbonne University in Paris, she started working in journalism and as a programmer in film festivals, looking to combine her interests for cinema and the study of contemporary Arab societies. After working as a programmer at the International Human Rights Film Festival in Buenos Aires, Argentina, she moved back to Paris where she is now based. She worked as a programmer for the Palest’In&Out Contemporary Art festival in Paris. She acted in three feature films and currently works on film and documentary projects as a director, author and assistant director.

Marie Balducchi



Marie Balducchi is associate producer within AGAT Films / Ex Nihilo a collective of 8 producers inspired by shared values which do not contradict each’s point of view or sensitivity. The company reconciles daily an individual practice dedicated to developing, producing and enhancing the work of authors and a collective practice based on financial, editorial and human solidarity between the partners. This respect for differences and principle of solidarity are at the heart of AGAT Films / Ex Nihilo. Marie Balducchi produces films for cinema and television while participating in film support commissions such as ECLA, Pôle Image Haute Normandie, Pictanovo, Media. Her recent filmography includes ‘Talking about Trees’ by Suhaib Gasmelbari (2019), ‘A Young Girl in Her Nineties’ by Valeria Bruni Tedeschi and Yann Coridian (2017), and ‘National Diploma’ by Dieudo Hamadi (2015).

Director’s Note

I come from a generation that grew up in the deafening silence of the Algerian War, a generation born to grandparents who apparently had “no story”. But in fact, to terribly silent grandparents. Their recent separation, after 62 years of marriage, was an electroshock and was the inciting moment that triggered my desire to make this film. I was submerged with fear when they separated; I realised they might disappear without passing on their story. I needed to understand where I come from and to understand my family’s place in the history of Algeria and France. Through the intimate portrait of Aïcha and Mabrouk, this film shines a light on the distances we carry within ourselves and perpetuate with those we love, while unpicking and documenting the indelible suffering of a colonised mind. Their intimacy becomes a mirror of the collective history of the Algerian immigration in France.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Budget: **\$232,280**
Secured Financing: **\$202,280**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Aide à la post-production Ile de France
- AKKA Films (Switzerland)
- Doha Film Institute
- IEFTA (Doc Corner-Marché du Film Cannes)
- IMS (International Media Support)
- Institut Français d’Alger
- Making of Films (Algeria)
- Takmil

Looking For:

- International Sales Agent
- Festivals
- Broadcasters
- Distributors

Director / Screenwriter / Producer :
Dea Gjinovci

Producers:
Sophie Faudel
Britta Rindelaub
Jasmin Basic
Heidi Fleisher

Company Profile
Mélisande Films is an independent film production company documentary created in 2009 by Sophie Faudel in Paris. We are focused on documentaries and storytelling that approaches historical, society and cultural issues from a challenging and yet creative point of view. Our aim is to explore and question our contemporary society and bring important issues to the public eye. We work with confirmed filmmakers such as Jérôme Prieur, Véronique Lagoarde Ségot or Samuel Lajus as well as emerging talent currently working on their first feature documentaries or web series.

Sales Agent:
Cat & Docs
Catherine Le Clef
cat@catndocs.com

Contact:
Dea Gjinovci
Amok Films
dea@amokfilms.fr

Picture Lock / Feature Documentary

Wake Up on Mars

‘Réveil Sur Mars’ / Switzerland, France, Qatar / Albanian, Swedish
/ 2020 / 74 mins
Genre: **Documentary**
Interests: **Creative Documentary**

A Roma boy living in Sweden dreams of building a spaceship to escape the reality of his family’s pending asylum request, and the mysterious coma-like illness that has befallen his siblings.



Furkan, the youngest member of a Roma family living in Sweden, attempts to come to terms with the mysterious illness of his two sisters. Ibadeta and Djeneta have been in a coma-like state for several years, victims of what has been named the “resignation syndrome.” Traumatized by the thought of being sent back to Kosovo, their homeland, their minds and bodies have suddenly gone to sleep. In central Sweden, his family attempts to rebuild a normal life, but so far, their asylum applications have been refused one after the other. Furkan tries to escape his reality by building his own spaceship to fulfil his dream: to go live on Mars and save his two sisters. At the core of this film lies this one question: “What happens to human beings, and in particular children, when all hope is gone?”

Dea Gjinovci



Dea Gjinovci is a Swiss-Albanian director/producer with a background in Economics and Anthropology; she splits her time between Paris, London and Geneva. She is a 2019 Sundance Talent Forum alum and 2019 Film Independent Fellow. Her award-winning documentary short ‘Sans le Kosovo’ screened at several international festivals and won Best National Film at Dokufest International Film. Her debut feature-length documentary ‘Wake Up on Mars’ received support from the Sundance Film Institute and Ford Foundation JustFilms, and won the “Perspectives d’un doc” pitch award at Visions du Réel 2018. It has been selected as part of the 2020 Tribeca Film Festival in New York City. In June 2018, she co-founded Amok Films with fellow filmmaker Antoine Goldet in Paris. Her work has been described as “a pure embodiment of human dignity” with a sense of “beauty, poetry, sensitivity and wonder”.

Heidi Fleisher



Heidi Fleisher is an American documentary film producer, buyer and consultant who lives in Paris and works internationally. Most recently she handled international acquisitions for French public broadcaster France 2’s new creative documentary strand ‘25 Shades of Docs’ from their launch in 2017 through 2019. From 2017 - 2018, Heidi also worked as a development executive for LA-based Synthesis Films, identifying and developing new non-fiction projects for the company to produce as part of their first-look deal with Netflix. From 2015 - 2016 she worked as Head of International Sales and Acquisitions for ARTE Sales, the distribution arm of the European broadcaster ARTE. Prior to that, for almost a decade, Heidi provided creative, editorial and strategic consulting to documentary producers and filmmakers, helping them develop their projects and navigate the international market. She also worked as Head of Emerging Producer Training Initiatives for Sunny Side of the Doc, and is currently a mentor for the Hot Docs Blue Ice Group fellows for 2019-2020.

Sophie Faudel



Graduate of Philosophy and Modern Letters, Sophie Faudel first worked in contemporary music and musical theatre. In 1998 she started working as a producer at the Compagnie des Phares et Balises, where she worked for ten years and produced over 50 documentaries. In 2009, she created her own production company Mélisande Films, where she has the pleasure and freedom of producing a variety of documentary genres by both confirmed filmmakers and upcoming young talent.

Director’s Note

I want my documentary to elevate the discourse around asylum-seekers and the way they are treated—particularly focusing on their mental health. The syndrome of resignation is one of the most extreme expressions of hopelessness. What is particular to this illness is that it only affects children. These are traumas that they will carry on to their adulthood. I want the audience to experience the narrative through children’s understanding of migration; delving into their imagination to understand their inner life and how they cope with uncertainty and trauma.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION	Total Budget: \$600,000 Secured Financing: \$560,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perspectives d’un doc by RTS• Private Investment• Procirep (Producers’ union, France)• Radio Télévisions Suisse production funding (Switzerland)• Sundance Institute Award• Sundance Post-Production• tv fund (Switzerland)• uBS foundation• Visions du réel• XTR	Looking For: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outreach• Distributors
	Confirmed Financial Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 25 shades of doc (France)• Cineforum (Swiss regional fund)• Doha Film Institute• France 2• Migros• National Centre for Cinematography (CNC, France)• OFC (Federal funding, Switzerland)		

Qumra Projects

Work-in-Progress Short Narrative

‘**Al-Sit**’ by Suzannah Mirghani

‘**Olayan**’ by Khalifa Al Marri

Picture Lock Short Narrative

‘**J’ai Le Cafard**’ by Maysaa Al Mumin

‘**Under Her Skin**’ by Meriem Mesraoua

Work-in-Progress Short Documentary

‘**Ode to Loneliness**’ by Rawane Nassif

Picture Lock Short Documentary

‘**And Then They Burn the Sea**’ by Majid Al-Remaihi

‘**Ander**’ by Alina Mustafina

‘**Emily, ilaw ng tahanan**’ by Anna Prokou

‘**Ghareeb (Stranger)**’ by Yasser Mustafa and Christophe Buffet

‘**Okht Rjal (Woman of Steel)**’ by Obada Yousef Jarbi

‘**Under the Lemon Tree**’ by Noor Alasswad

Director / Screenwriter:
Suzannah Mirghani

Producer:
Eiman Mirghani

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Eiman Mirghani
em.mirghani@gmail.com

Al-Sit

Sudan, Qatar / Arabic / 2020
Genre: **Drama**
Interests: **Coming-of-Age, Family, Identity**

In a Sudanese cotton-farming village, 15-year-old Nafisa’s parents have arranged her marriage to Nadir, a young Sudanese businessman living abroad. However, before any wedding can take place, Nafisa’s grandmother Al-Sit, the powerful village matriarch, must first give her blessing. But will Nafisa ever be able to make her own choices?



The story is seen through the eyes of Nafisa, a 15-year-old girl whose parents have arranged her marriage to Nadir, a young Sudanese businessman living abroad. However, before any wedding can take place, Nafisa’s grandmother Al-Sit, the village matriarch, must first give her blessing. Today, Nadir has come to seal the deal, and the village is buzzing with excitement at how Al-Sit will react to the fact that Nadir has come alone, without his parents...a great shame in rural Sudanese culture. Nafisa, is torn between her desire for the new—in the form of Nadir’s exotic modernity—and respect for tradition—in the form Al-Sit’s authority. But will Nafisa ever be able to make her own choices?

Suzannah Mirghani



Suzannah Mirghani is a writer, researcher, and independent filmmaker, highlighting stories from the Arab world. Being of multicultural Sudanese and Russian backgrounds, she is interested in stories that examine the complexity of identity. Suzannah is a media studies and museum studies graduate, currently working at the Center for International and Regional Studies (CIRS), Georgetown University in Qatar. She has made several short films, including, ‘Msheireb Oral History Films’ (2017), ‘There Be Dragons’ (2017), ‘Caravan’ (2016), ‘Hind’s Dream’ (2014), and ‘Hamour’ (2011).

Eiman Mirghani



Upon graduating with a BA in Media & Film Studies from the University of Nottingham in 2015, Sudanese independent filmmaker Eiman Mirghani started working in various roles within cinema. She is a producer and the founder of the production company, Filmmena. In 2019, Eiman has collaborated with director Maysaa Al Mumin for an AFAC and DFI-supported short film titled ‘J’ai Le Cafard’. She is now preparing to produce three short films in 2020, including the DFI-funded short film Al-Sit by Suzannah Mirghani. Eiman is also a director, having written and directed two short films - ‘Is That All There Is?’, a neo-noir crime drama and ‘The Bleaching Syndrome’, a personal documentary - which has screened in various festivals worldwide.

Director’s Note

This film gives voice to young girls like Nafisa, teenagers living on the margins of their own lives, watching silently as others make important decisions on their behalf. Village girls like Nafisa are caught between modernity—represented by Nadir in his polyester suit—and tradition—represented by Al-Sit in her handmade cotton clothes. This is a story that addresses the reality of broad political issues, including colonialism, capitalism, and feminism, and how these big issues affect small individuals. This film evokes the atmosphere of Tayeb Saleh’s book, ‘Season of Migration to the North’, but instead of focusing on a male protagonist, this is a story from Sudan about women—both powerless and powerful. In some villages, the matriarch remains revered and respected, even though young girls are the most vulnerable in society. This film explores two ends of the female power spectrum, a powerless girl and a powerful matriarch.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Budget: **\$23,000**

Looking For:

- Editing Mentorship
- Festival Strategy
- Distribution

Director / Screenwriter:
Khalifa AlMarri

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Qatari Film Fund
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Olayan

Jordan, Qatar / Arabic / 2020 / 6 min
Genre: **Short Narrative**
Interests: **Coming-of-Age**

Hamad is a 10-year-old boy who lives with his parents and their camels in the desert. When one of their camels gives birth to a baby calf, Hamad's reclusive life changes and the two become fast friends. When his father decides to sell the calf in the market, Hamad goes to extreme lengths to free his friend and bring him back home.



Hamad is a 10-year-old boy who lives with his parents and their camels in the desert. He is constantly reminded by his father that he's not a man and that he needs to be one. When a camel gives birth to a baby camel calf, Hamad's life changes and his loneliness goes away. Needing the money, his father decides to sell the calf in the market. Hamad goes to extreme lengths to free his friend and bring the calf back home. At the camel market, Hamad releases the calf and runs away with it. Returning home on foot, Hamad later catches a lift from a stranger who tries to steal the calf. The pair get chased in a palm tree farm, but narrowly escape. In the morning, after walking in different directions, he realizes that he's lost. His last hope is in his father's words, "Camels always find their way back home." At first, it looks like everything is lost, but the calf starts grunting and trotting up the hill and finds the way back home. Hamad confronts his father after he tries to return the calf to the market. Hamad's father gives up and returns the calf to Hamad, claiming that he will never be a man. Hamad decides to prove him wrong by slaughtering the camel for a feast.

Khalifa AlMarri



Khalifa AlMarri is a visual artist who has made several contributions to the fine art community in Qatar. He is the director of 'Man of the House', which won a 'Made in Qatar' Award at Ajyal in 2015. AlMarri studied Mass Communications at Qatar University and holds a diploma in Directing and Filmmaking from the New York Film Academy. He made 'Fragile' as part of a joint Doha Film Institute - La Fémis summer course in Paris in 2016. 'Embodiment' was one of his abstract documentaries that played very well in festivals worldwide. His documentary film 'Voyager' is now travelling the world, screening in several festivals and exhibitions. He just finished shooting his latest narrative short film 'Olayan' that was part of the QFF by the DFI. Currently, he's shooting a web series with the Ministry of Defense about the national service.

Director's Note

This film is a father-son relationship that unravels through the boy's relationship with his camel. It is a reminiscence of a wonderful age when people were modest, and life was simple. The story has a big dilemma and a philosophical question that haunts the kid when he loses his camel. The film deals with many personal experiences and thoughts I had during my childhood years with my Bedouin family, and through this film, I wanted to show the beautiful old days, when boys were men who slaughtered camels for the guests and when our culture was shaped. We have a lot of beautiful desert locations in Qatar, and I want to take this opportunity to bring those places back to life, after they were abandoned.

- Looking For:
- Festival Strategy
 - Editing Feedback
 - Film Marketing & Packaging

Director / Screenwriter :
Maysaa Almumin

Producer:
Eiman Mirghani

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J'ai Le Cafard

Kuwait, Egypt, Sudan, Qatar / Arabic / 2020 / 14 mins
Genre: **Short Narrative**
Interests: **Depression, Friendship, Change**

A woman in her forties struggles to make sense of her downhearted mood until she encounters a cockroach in the office toilets.



A woman in her forties struggles with keeping up appearances in a highly driven corporate office. When she develops a friendship with a cockroach she meets in the office toilet, it becomes both her saving grace and cause for angst.

Maysaa Almumin



Maysaa Almumin is currently living and working as an Assistant Professor in design in Qatar. She grew up

in London where she was trained and practiced in architecture after which she moved to Kuwait and then Qatar where she started, acting and scriptwriting since 2011. She has had acting training with Scandar Copti and Daniel Suissa and has been involved in film projects in Kuwait, Italy, Egypt and Qatar. Maysaa wrote, directed and performed in short film based art work 'Rites of Passage' and 'Calling of the Congress' as explorations of the role and character of design/set/objects within narrative film, which were exhibited at the Voice of Feminism exhibition in October of 2018. Maysaa is currently in post-production on her AFAC and DFI granted short film due for completion in early 2020.

Eiman Mirghani



Upon graduating with a BA in Media & Film Studies from the University of Nottingham in 2015, Sudanese

independent filmmaker Eiman Mirghani started working in various roles within cinema. She is a producer and the founder of the production company, Filmmena. In 2019, Eiman has collaborated with director Maysaa Al Mumin for an AFAC and DFI-supported short film titled 'J'ai Le Cafard'. She is now preparing to produce three short films in 2020, including the DFI-funded short film Al-Sit by Suzannah Mirghani. Eiman is also a director, having written and directed two short films - 'Is That All There Is?', a neo-noir crime drama and 'The Bleaching Syndrome', a personal documentary - which has screened in various festivals worldwide.

Director's Note

At one point in my life, I had nothing to complain about. I had a wonderful husband, great children, a fantastic career, everything I could ever want and need, yet still, for two years I endured sleepless nights, low energy, lack of self-worth and self-loathing. When a doctor diagnosed me with clinical depression, it was a profound moment of realization for me of something that I was unable to recognize. With the false general impression that depression is only triggered by tragic events, it becomes hard for some to understand that seemingly picture-perfect lives may hide depression, so much so that even the one that suffers depression may equally be as dismissive of all the symptoms they feel. Furthermore, many have become so adept at coping with struggle; they become incapable of identifying it and therefore, unable to address it. This film is about that moment of realization, refusing to accept a giant emotional intruder in one's life, taking off that shoe and having a go at getting it out of your life by giving it a whack! "J'ai le Cafard" is a French expression; it translates as "I have the cockroach" and also means "I am depressed".

Looking For:

- Festival Strategy
- Funding
- Distribution

Director / Screenwriter :
Meriem Mesraoua

Producer:
François d'Artemare

Company Profile
Les Films de l'Après-Midi has produced and co-produced films from all over the world. Their work spans Bosnia ('Snow' by Aida Begic – Critic'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 Hossain – TIFF 2019), and Tunisia ('Noura's Dream' by Hinde Boujemaa – TIFF 2019). The company now develops the feature films of Marco Martins, Angela Schanelec, Laurent Herbiet, Diana Saqueb Jamal, Mohamed Siam, and Meriem Mesraoua, among others.

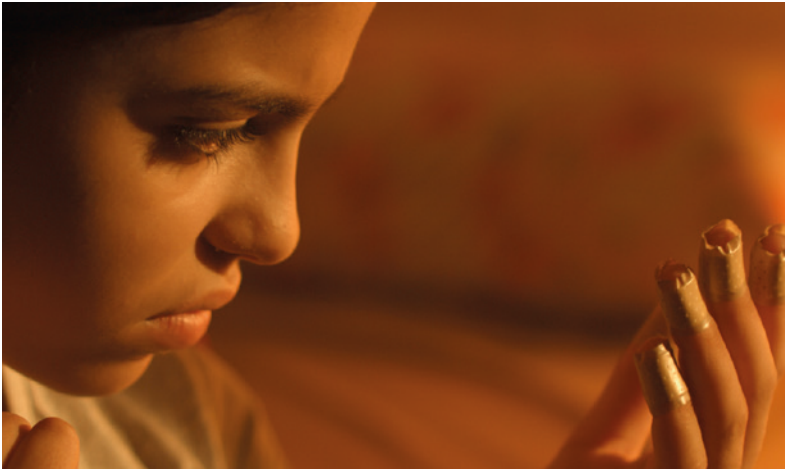
Contact:
François d'Artemare
Les Films de l'Après-Midi
contact@films-am.com

Picture Lock / Short Narrative

Under Her Skin

'à fleur de peau' / France, Qatar, Algeria / Arabic / 2020 / 15 mins
Genre: **Drama**
Interests: **Coming-of-Age, Identity**

When her mother forbids her from biting her nails, Sarah must now abide by rules she does not fully understand.



Oran, Algeria. When her mother forbids her from biting her nails, Sarah must now abide by rules she does not fully understand. By regaining control over her actions and projected image, Sarah slowly redefines her attitude towards herself and others.

Meriem Mesraoua



Meriem Mesraoua earned a BSc with Honours in Media Industries and Technologies from Northwestern University. She explored various facets of the film industry, while at Miramax, NYWIFT, DFI, film sets or festivals. Her short films are 'Coucou' (2009), 'Our Time Is Running Out' (2017), and 'Under Her Skin' (2020). She is currently developing her first feature narrative, 'The Other Wife'.

François d'Artemare



François d'Artemare established the Portuguese film company Filmes do Tejo in 1996, and now runs a library of more than 70 titles. Among them, films by Margarida Cardoso, Serge Trefaut, Inês de Medeiros and João Salaviza. He produced, with the Paris-based company Les Films de l'Après-Midi he founded in 2001, the three feature films by Manoel de Oliveira—'Christopher Columbus, The Enigma' (2007), 'Eccentricities of a Blonde-haired Girl' (2009), and 'The Strange Case of Angelica' (2010).

Director's Note

Set in Algeria, 'Under Her Skin' explores a teen's unusual rite of passage and confrontation with conformism—a rupture triggered and dictated by the gaze of others. The girl must conform to a code she does not fully understand, as she is deemed too young to grasp the real motives behind it—a fascinating paradox: a child who incites reactions despite herself, is now primarily seen as a body she must alienate herself from. And so, a gesture as trivial as biting her nails becomes her mother's primary concern, perpetuating the blind transfer of an internalized, yet unfavourable mandate. By amplifying this unconscious gesture, its contradiction—as it allows control over the body, while deteriorating it—mirrors the contradiction in the imposed teaching: conforming to an image that inhibits. The intrusive punishments disrupt the girl's movements, while giving way to her mother's control. The girl's impeded image yet awakens her to the gaze she is subjected to, unveiling the paradoxical world her mother is stuck in and finally inciting her to react.

- Looking For:
- Festivals
 - Sales
 - Distribution

Director:
Rawane Nassif

Contact:
Rawane Nassif
rawane.nassif@gmail.com

Ode to Loneliness

Qatar, Lebanon / Arabic, English / 2020 / 22 mins
Genre: **Short Documentary**
Interests: **Short Documentary**

A woman lives alone in a cubical hotel room with a view to the city. She films herself, the city, and her dreams for a month.



Dreaming of the city, she gets lost in intricate geometries. Sharp edges of buildings etch her skin silently, chiselling the limits of her consciousness, altering her perception of distance and scale, redefining intimacy and sensuality. Rhythms, towers, workers, sunsets, sunrises, night-time and dream-time alternate and repeat and get lost one in another endlessly. Slowly, she becomes an image of her former self. Slowly she grows older. She once wanted something, but she forgot what it was. Trapped in time, she waits and watches life pass by below her feet, lest some of it visits her abode. Housed in aloneness, in the perimeter of a cube, the architects build memories that only boredom could destroy. The city enters the house in all its details. From macro to micro, a constant flow of adaptation has to happen. The limit between the house and the city, the city and the body, the body and the dream, the dream and her, gets blurred. Nothing is real, yet all is artificial. From her window, from her house with a view, with some clothes, some objects, a routine, and a deep desire to feel, she escapes. The night comes, silently a door opens, and she walks away. The house is a body that flies.

Rawane Nassif



Born in Beirut in 1983, Rawane Nassif is a Lebanese-Canadian filmmaker and anthropologist.

She works in research and films often addressing subjects such as space, identities, displacement and memory. She collaborated on several documentaries in Lebanon, wrote a book on the politics of memory in the reconstruction of downtown Beirut, worked with immigrants and indigenous people in Canada, conducted visual research on nomadic traditions in Kyrgyzstan, taught anthropological courses in Tajikistan, wrote children's books based on collected oral histories in Honduras and worked as a senior researcher on art films commissioned by the National Museum of Qatar and produced by the Doha Film Institute. Her latest short 'Turtles are Always Home' screened at the Berlinale and TIFF and won international awards including the best new vision short at the San Francisco International Film Festival, and the best experimental at the New Orleans Film Festival.

Director's Note

When does a film start and when does it end? This film started years ago when I began to travel and got used to inhabiting different houses and got attached to mundane objects that filled my 'familiar' place for a short while. An urban nomad living in cityscapes and reminiscing over a fictive home. This film started when I lived alone, completely alone, for the first time, in a hotel for a year. A lonely fish in a LED-lit aquarium. This film started when my friend passed by to drop me a darbuka, crossed the streets and passed away. This film started when I decided to fast for Ramadan for the first time, and wrote my daily reflections in silence, in the house, for a month. This film started when I decided to leave, and started to film the space, lest I forget all that loneliness that filled it. And it transformed me. Loneliness became aloneness, and I met myself in the editing room. This film got interrupted when I returned to Lebanon to join the revolution. The final edit is yet to be found. The film has yet to end; loneliness became a fleeting memory.

- Looking For:
- Editing Advice
 - Funding
 - Festival Strategy
 - Distribution

Director:
Majid Al-Remaihi

Contact:
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Qatari Film Fund
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And Then They Burn the Sea

Qatar / Arabic / 2020 / 19 mins
Genre: **Short Documentary**
Interests: **Memory, Heritage, Personal, Dreams, Nostalgia**

‘And Then They Burn the Sea’ is a film-poem that reflects on the memories of a mother with dementia as it threads through a history of images, personal archives, cultural motifs as an ode to the fragility of memory.



When the protagonist’s mother loses her memories to dementia, so does the protagonist’s certainty over his own memories. What remains after a loss of memory are spectres of a time and place which he finds are always haunting but never arriving. The associations he holds to the mother become indiscernible from dreams, images, and the places from whence she came and that she won’t be able to recognize in their contemporaneity. Both drawing on the accelerated rewriting of urbanism of cities in Qatar and the crumbling fishermen villages of the 20th century, the protagonist segues between sites of alienation and mourning. Mirroring a series of rituals performed by the sea, the protagonist contemplates an end to mourning for lost memories and futures. Drawing on scenes from the Kuwaiti feature ‘Cruel Sea’ (1972) by Khalid Al Siddiq, deemed to be the birth of cinema in the Arabian Gulf, where we see the mothers of pearl divers confronting the cruel fate of the sea whose legacies echo in cultural memory. Envisioned as a film-poem, the film threads through a history of images, personal archives, cultural motifs, and a number of texts as an ode to the fragility of memory.

Majid Al-Remaihi



Majid Al-Remaihi is a Qatari filmmaker and artist. He is interested in the practice of filmmaking as a tool for unravelling the institutional and social purview of art in Qatar and the Gulf region. He completed his first short film, ‘Domestic Acoustics’ (2017), through the Doha Film Institute’s Documentary Lab. Currently, he’s in post-production with his film which he produced under the mentorship of Oscar-nominated director Rithy Panh and the support of the Qatari Film Fund. He is also part of the artist collective Ab6al (with Abdullah Al Mutairi and Sarah AbuAbdallah). Professionally, he is part of the Film Programming team at the Doha Film Institute.

Director’s Note

The maternal denotes a lot of mental associations which we deem essential such as the motherland, mother tongue, etc. What happens when that becomes contested, and it becomes a possibility to reconsider those associations? What began as an obsession with the unreliability of memories and the impact of my mother’s memories on my own turned into a process of working through images and unravelling ways of communicating those wordless relationships. My mother’s dementia instigated a new sense of identification with the role of forgetting as a necessary and unstoppable force in the way we deal with unresolved links both on a personal and cultural level.

Looking For:
• Programming Advice

Director:
Alina Mustafina

Contact:
Alina Mustafina
nomadfilmmaker@gmail.com

Ander

Qatar, Kazakhstan / Russian, English, Kazakh / 2020 / 15 mins
Genre: **Short Documentary**
Interests: **Children, Loneliness, Illness, Mother-Son Relationships**

A short documentary about the world of an energetic five-year-old-boy who, despite his asthma and a very severe rare dairy allergy that isolates him from other kids during mealtime, simply enjoys his childhood.



Five-year-old Ander lives in Qatar with his family and has a rare severe allergy and asthma. He can die from even one drop of any dairy product, chokes from pizza and milk’s smell, and gets a rash if someone touches him after eating any dairy product. In spite of everything, Ander looks like an ordinary, very active and joyful kid. But due to his allergic conditions, he must eat separately from his classmates at school and brings his own cake to birthday parties. Even with his own brother and parents, they often eat different food. Ander’s mother is from Kazakhstan and for Kazakh nomads—dairy along with meat and dough is seen as a source of life. How to find an identity, if food, which was vital for your ancestors kills you? How to protect your child from a society which has danger in its food? It is a diary of a dairy-free struggle, fear and a strong will to live, while searching for an identity in a modern Doha.

Alina Mustafina



Alina Mustafina is a Kazakh journalist, writer and a filmmaker currently living in Qatar. She is a real nomad, as her ancestors used to be. She has been changing countries for living since she left her motherland Kazakhstan in 2008 for UAE, Spain, Turkey and now Qatar. Journalism and filmmaking degrees in Spain, professional work and life experience in all those countries make her works to be a combination of searching for an identity and being a citizen of the world. She has a couple of student and independent short films and a book published in Russian. Her last documentary ‘Ander’ was filmed in Qatar under the mentorship of Oscar-nominated director Rithy Panh during the documentary lab at Doha Film Institute.

Director’s Note

Being a mother of the main character and a director at the same time was a great challenge—that’s why the story is very intimate, private and sensitive. The child speaks about death and fear of being in a coma again, and the mother hides her concerns for her child. The story told in the film ‘Ander’ is the director’s struggle every day. What does a five-year-old boy feel with his inability to be like others? He is very strong and courageous like a warrior, but very fragile at the same time. His joy of life is enormous. How to live in society, which can simply kill you during lunch or dinner? How to identify yourself if you can’t even eat the same food as your parents and ancestors? What is “the normality”? These are questions which the director asks in the film.

- Looking For:
- Festival Strategy
 - Distribution
 - Film Marketing & Packaging

Director / Producer:
Anna Prokou
aprokou@gmail.com
www.annaprokou.com

Picture Lock / Short Documentary

Emily, ilaw ng tahanan

Qatar, Greece / English / 2020 / 19 mins

Genre: **Short Documentary**

Interests: **Freedom, Motherhood, Trauma, Resilience**

Most people keep their trauma locked up inside, but for Emily, a Filipina singer in Doha, opening her “box of trauma” and confronting a painful past is her only chance to break free.



“I live inside a box, but one day I will live outside the box.” This film tells the story of Emily, a 25-year-old Filipina singer in Doha. But this is not about a performance. Instead, it is a real and deeply personal story—a journey of discovery, identity and self-preservation. Most people keep their deepest trauma hidden and locked up inside a box, but for Emily, her “box of trauma” has grown so big that confronting a painful past is the only chance of escaping. The film takes place entirely within a red box. Every night, Emily puts on her best face as she gets on stage to serenade large crowds with her powerful voice. But when the show ends, her nightmares return. Consumed by fear and guilt, Emily seeks to find answers in her bid to break free from the shackles of her past.

Anna Prokou



Anna Prokou is a documentary filmmaker and film/video editor from Greece, currently based in Qatar. She studied Film Directing at Edinburgh’s Queen Margaret University from which she earned her bachelor’s degree with distinction. Anna has also obtained diplomas in film/video editing, sound engineering and music technology in Greece. In addition to her film experience, Anna has a strong background in music. She studied and has earned several degrees including in piano, fugue, counterpoint and harmony. Since 2003, Anna has edited more than 65 documentaries for independent production companies, private channels, the national Greek Public Television, and the Al Jazeera Media Network, including many that have won multiple awards at major international film festivals. For the past six years, she has been working as a video editor at Al Jazeera Media Network while also creating her own documentaries. Her previous documentaries include ‘Tasawwuf Inspiration’ (2015) and ‘Dukes on the Ropes’ (2018).

Director’s Note

‘Emily, ilaw ng tahanan’ is based on an interview with a 25-year-old Filipina singer at a Doha bar who narrates her real-life story. It was during one of those conversations when she confided in me that, “I live inside a box, but one day I will live outside the box.” I instantly thought about the ancient Greek myth of Pandora’s Box, and decided to shoot a documentary inside a red box filled with various props that would symbolise Emily’s life journey. Guided by her belief in God and empowered by the love for her daughter, Emily confronts the nightmares that haunt her as she bids to find a way out of her “box”. Just like in the myth of Pandora, where the opening up of her box released all kinds of evils into the world and only left “Hope” inside of it, Emily tries to reconcile with the trauma that defines her past and present, in the hope it will ultimately lead to her soul’s “rebirth”. I made this documentary with the aim of understanding our inner strength—to discover what it means to break free from the shackles of the past and move forward by unsealing and delving deep into the “box” that carries everything we keep well-hidden within us.

Looking for:

- Festival Strategy
- Distribution
- Marketing & Packaging

Directors:
Yasser Mustafa, Christophe Buffet

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Christophe Buffet
cb@memini.net

Ghareeb

'Stranger' / Qatar, France / No Dialogue / 2020 / 11 mins
Genre: **Short Documentary**
Interests: **Quiet, Isolation, History, Renewal**

The security guard of an abandoned elementary school explores remains of the neighbourhood's past residents, weaving their mysteries into his own narrative.



Khalid is the security guard in an abandoned elementary school. The camera follows him during a day as he makes his rounds through the empty classrooms and encounters remains of the neighbourhood's past residents. Some of his discoveries remind him of the life he has left behind.

Yasser Mustafa



Yasser Mustafa is a Qatari cinematographer. A graduate from the Global Cinematography Institute in

Hollywood and Maine Media College in Maine, he has been working in the film industry since 2010. After shooting his first short film 'AirPort Road' in 2012, he has shot over 20 short narratives, 15 TV commercials and over 15 documentaries. His films have been screened in different film festivals such as Ajyal Film Festival, Chicago International Film Festival, Cardiff International Film Festival and Polish International Film Festival. In August 2019, Yasser Mustafa won his first cinematography award for the short documentary 'Just Another Memory' at the South Film and Arts Academy Festival. He has directed one short narrative 'Skipping the Shadows' in 2015 and two short documentaries, 'Al Sumr Tree' in 2017 and 'Ghareeb' in 2019.

Christophe Buffet



Christophe Buffet is Digital Media Senior Specialist at Qatar Museums, where he recently led the

team that delivered the digital media productions for the opening of the National Museum of Qatar. Prior to moving to Qatar, he has worked with museums in the UK, France, Belgium, and Brazil. Christophe graduated from Paris 8 University (Hypermedia). He has performed live and presented experimental real-time audiovisual work using sensors at the Centre Pompidou and Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris, V2 Institute for the Unstable Media in Rotterdam, DA2 Domus Artium in Salamanca, Lowlands Festival in the Netherlands, and Hangar in Barcelona. He is fascinated with the transformations of Doha, the city he calls home since 2018.

Director's Note

In the historic heart of Doha, Qatar's capital, the Msheireb neighbourhood has gradually been evacuated over the last ten years to give way to new property development projects. Situated near the Emir's palace and the Souq Waqif market, it is one of Doha's oldest neighbourhoods, and now, the epicentre of colliding worlds. On one side are brand new ultra-luxurious buildings with hotels, offices, apartments and schools, designed to bring local Qatari families back into the heart of the city. On the other side is a bustling area where workers from India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka live, shop and pray, while expecting to be evicted at any time from the crumbling historical Qatari villas they live in. Right in the centre of this neighbourhood remains an old elementary school that was once the first primary school for Qatari girls. It was later used to store artefacts collected over the years to preserve the memories of those who were living around, as they disappeared to make way for the new developments. The building is now about to be transformed into a residence for designers and fashion creators, but in the meantime, it is a deserted space in limbo where security guards spend long hours alone. In one conversation, the security guard jokingly said that if someone were to break into the school, he would invite them over for tea because he is so bored of looking after the dust.

Looking For:

- Festival Strategy
- Distribution
- Marketing & Packaging

Director:
Obada Yousef Jarbi

Contact:
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objarbi@gmail.com

Picture Lock / Short Documentary

Okht Rjal

‘Woman of Steel’ / Qatar, Jordan / Arabic / 2020 / 17 mins
Genre: **Short Documentary**
Interests: **Courage, Women’s Issues, Strength, Poverty**

In a broken welfare system, a mother takes to the streets to collect and sell scrap metal to provide for her family.



Um Mohamed is a proud mother of three and a wife to a polio survivor. Due to her husband’s disability, he struggles and is incapable of joining the workforce. As a result, Um Mohamed roams the streets of Irbid and collects scrap metal and recyclables to sell in a male-dominant industrial area. Though she provides for her family and has earned the title of the breadwinner, she does not earn the respect and appreciation that comes with it, as she’s still expected to fulfil her cooking and cleaning duties at home.

Obada Yousef 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. Jarbi is an aspiring filmmaker, who began his filmmaking career in 2014, when he started filming and producing local films, and made his directorial debut with the documentary ‘Addicted to Alienation’ (2016). He completed his second short film ‘The Fishermen’ (2017), through the Doha Film Institute’s documentary workshop, and the film screened in several international film festivals. Obada directed ‘Rum’ (2018) his third documentary, and it was his first experience in Jordan. In 2016, he started developing his documentary ‘Okht Rjal’ between Jordan and Qatar as he went through the development process at Qumra 2018 and he started filming in 2019 as a part of a documentary workshop with Rithy Panh. Throughout his filmmaking journey, Jarbi hopes to send a meaningful message about his country and culture to a variety of audiences.

Director’s Note

Um Mohammed, for me, was the reflection of the reality of every woman in my country of Jordan. Everything I saw in her from the first moment was making me proud. I saw dignity and bravery and then when I lived with her family, I saw sacrifice—sacrificing the minimum requirement for every woman to live a fair life or even equal life to other women in her environment. All the traditions and stereotypes that I had were changed because of her. Women can be in power. Women can be strong. Women can lead families to righteousness. And we need to appreciate them, unlike the males in her family she cleans, she brings food, and her kids rarely show pride in their mother. Watching this family reminded me when I heard the men in my country saying, “the right place for the women is the kitchen”. All those sayings and more surrounding a lot of women like Um Mohammed illustrate they just need the chance to show their bravery and strength. I remember that I heard that the men are the breadwinner and they have the power to give orders and make rules and the women should just follow “Home, food and safety mean power” this what the men were always saying. But with Um Mohammed when the circumstances

guide her to become the breadwinner of her house, she never uses the power of that against her husband. Instead, she chooses to keep this power with her husband and not to take it from him no matter what. Outside, she keeps it for herself, but when she gets home, she leaves all this on her back and returns to be the woman that simply lives in Irbid-Jordan.

- Looking For:
- Festival Strategy
 - Marketing and Distribution
 - Documentary Mentorship

Director:
Noor Al-Asswad

Contact:
Noor Al-Asswad
na1405925@student.qu.edu.qa

Under the Lemon Tree

Qatar, Palestine / Arabic / 2020 / 9 mins
Genre: **Short Documentary**
Interests: **Identity, Heritage Preservation, Memory**

An exiled Palestinian woman partakes in a humble fireside repast under a lemon tree that takes her backwards through the decades to her homeland.



In this documentary, we spend a day under the shade of a lemon tree with a Palestinian woman named Khaldieh, who was abruptly exiled from her hometown of Tulkarem in 1967. Preparing herself a humble breakfast of za'atar and inhaling the smell of sage, she recreates her homeland through an assemblage of simple elements. Though they may seem trivial, for many Palestinians they are among the only tangible pieces of their lost homeland that they still possess. She retreats into her memories of early life in Palestine and, taking the viewer with her, gives voice to her deep longing for her land and home, while reminiscing on the hardships of exile, the things she experienced, witnessed and lost. She unfolds the trauma of her sudden expulsion from the town she and all her ancestors grew up in. Holding onto a mere key to their home, she shares with us the pain of leaving her house for the last time, which she relates to her constant dreams of return.

Noor Al-Asswad



Noor Al-Asswad is a budding Palestinian filmmaker whose works explore the multidirectional connections between memory, identity, loss, history, home, longing, land, and heritage. She was born and raised in Syria until she had to leave in 2012 due to the political turmoil. Her raw and earnest style invites the viewer to jump through time and perspective. She graduated with a Bachelor's in Mass Communication in 2018, and Her previous works include 'Noah' (2018) and 'Samha' (2017).

Director's Note

Exile and expulsion are a familiar habitat for me. My birthplace is Damascus, but my roots are in Haifa. Bearing a Palestinian identity card, I spent my adolescence in Syria, until we were violently uprooted from the lives we had built for ourselves by the chaos and unrest that rendered the streets of my childhood unrecognizable. My family had to leave everything behind and start anew in an alien land. There was no land to stand on firmly, only wind blowing beneath the soles of my feet. I know too well the instability of a life with no place to return, with no place to call home. This film, for me, is an exploration into the meaning of belonging, and its strength and severability. It is an examination of the fragments of history and identity held in material culture, the objects through which Palestinian roots may one day come to bloom again. I want to know what it means to have a home; to have a country. I want to know what it meant to be in Palestine, meet the mother that died before I was born, and come face to face with the trauma, memory, and nostalgia that lives trans-generationally through me.

- Looking For:
- Festival Strategy
 - Marketing & Packaging
 - Funding

Qumra Projects

Development Qumra Series

‘**Al Zubara**’ by Hamad Al Mansouri

‘**Faraya**’ by Nadim Tabet and Mounia Akl

‘**Heim**’ by Liwaa Yazji and Mohammad Abou Laban

‘**The Life of Abdulla**’ (working title) by Abdulla Al Abdulla

‘**Meskoun**’ by Hicham Lasri

‘**The Source**’ by Erige Sehiri

Work-in-Progress Web Series

‘**The Closet Sessions**’ by Ahmad Satti Ibrahim

Director:
Hamad Al Mansouri

Screenwriter:
Dana Al Meer

Contact:
Hamad Al Mansouri
MHK Art Production
hamadalnesef@gmail.com

Al Zubara

Qatar / Arabic / 2020 / 20 mins
Genre: **Animation**
Interests: **Animation**

A futuristic take on Qatar, where Jassim Mohammed sets out to avenge his brother's murder.



Taking place in Qatar 150 years into the future, Jassim Mohammed, driven by revenge since the age of 12 for the murder of his brother, joins the police force to find the killer and get the justice he deserves. The killer is known as “Sinan”, but no one knows who he really is, to the point where he is considered a myth in the force. In Jassim’s pursuit of the killer, he is blinded by vengeance and makes a mistake that could have cost his squad their lives and damages his career. Jassim is now forced to join a team that’s headed by the first female detective in Qatar’s history, Fatima Jassim. Since both Fatima and Jassim need to prove their worth, they pursue the case of the mysterious ancient killer with the help of another mysterious hacker, Qnix. Eventually, they encounter Sinan and realize they need a bigger team with a unique set of skills in order to destroy Sinan once and for all.

Hamad Al Mansouri



Hamad Al Mansouri is an ambitious Qatari director whose dream it is to create, with his artist brother, the very first full animation series that is based on Qatar, its people, and culture.

Dana Al Meer



Qatari Dana Al Meer has been a filmmaker and photographer since she was 10 years old. She has always wished to share her thoughts and heart with the world through films with a different vision. She graduated from the University of Swansea with a BA in media studies. She believes that dreams come true; it always starts with a dream.

Director's Note

In the early 1990s, every day at around 3:30 pm we were glued to the TVs watching the latest anime show dubbed into classical Arabic by the best voice actors in the region's history. For us specifically, it has encouraged us, for more than two decades, to create something. For the Director, Hamad Al Mansouri and the artist Mohammed Al Mansouri it remained our passion to tell stories, and the idea that we Qataris can create and produce an animation that is by Qatar for Qatar. ‘Al Zubara’ is a story that has a piece from each of us. This story can only be told through our favourite medium, and that is animation. Through animation, we can write our love letter to the era of animated series that shaped who we are today.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Budget: **\$700,000**

Looking For:

- Funding
- Distribution

Directors / Screenwriters:
Nadim Tabet
Mounia Akl

Co-screenwriters:
Monsieur Untel
Wadih Safieddine

Producer:
Wadih Safieddine

Company Profile
Since Deja Vu first opened its doors in Dubai in 2007, we have constantly made films we could be proud of. We have produced some of the most iconic commercials in the region and have won awards at every major advertising show around the world. We have also expanded our network of offices in Beirut and Mumbai, and recently started developing original tv series and films aimed at the global market.

Contact:
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Faraya

Lebanon, Qatar / Arabic / 52 mins
Genre: **Drama**
Interests: **Crime, Social Issues, Thriller**

When the lifeless body of an Ethiopian housemaid is discovered in the luxurious Lebanese ski resort of Faraya—Said, a local policeman decides to conduct his investigation against all the odds. Will he be able to pursue his quest for truth until the end, at the risk of disrupting the entire community?



In its attempt to overcome a long-lasting economic crisis, the town hall of the luxurious Faraya resort relinquishes several acres of land to the real estate project “Faraya 2030” and a ski competition is held to celebrate the launch of construction. But on the first day of competition, the corpse of an Ethiopian housemaid employed by one of Faraya’s bourgeois families is found at the bottom of the tracks and brings the festivities to a halt. Said and his chief are immediately subject to hierarchical pressure, urging them to bring their investigation to a close in order to be able to resume the festivities. The chief of police soon concludes that the housekeeper fell by accident. Uncomfortable with this hasty conclusion, Said decides to pursue his investigation in secret, relying on the help of people from his entourage who are as inexperienced as he is. He will bravely continue to poke his nose where it does not belong, and soon he comes face-to-face with his fellow villagers, who fear that his revelations could jeopardize the work opportunities offered by Faraya 2030. Confronted with this unexpected opposition from his own social milieu, Said is faced with a dilemma—whether to end his investigation or pursue his quest for the truth, at the risk of finding himself alone against the community.

Nadim Tabet



Born in Beirut, Nadim Tabet was interested in cinema since his early teen years, first by watching a lot of films and then by shooting short fictions on video. In 1999, he travelled to France to study History, Philosophy and Cinema. Parallel to his studies, he directed several short films and cinematographic essays. In 2001, Nadim Tabet was a founding member of the Lebanese Film Festival, and later responsible for the selection and programming in several festivals. In 2017, he released his first feature film ‘One of These Days’, and is currently preparing his second feature film ‘Under Construction’.

Mounia Akl



Mounia Akl is a Lebanese filmmaker with a master’s degree in directing and screenwriting from Columbia University (New York). In 2016, her short film ‘Submarine’ was presented in the official selection at the Cannes Film Festival (Cinéfondation) and was

selected to compete at the festivals of Toronto and Dubai. She also directed an episode of the series ‘Do Not Disturb’ produced by Jude Law. Her first feature film, ‘Costa Brava Lebanon’, produced by Abbout Productions and Cinema Defacto, was selected for Cinéfondation in Cannes 2018, Torino Film Lab 2018 (Pitch Award) and for the Sundance Lab 2019.

Wadih Safieddine



Born in Beirut, Wadih Safieddine grew up in Paris during the Lebanese civil war before returning to settle in his country. He is a journalist, copywriter, manager of the Soap Kills band, creator of the Espace SD Art Center. He has produced hundreds of hours of tv shows on culture, the Francophonie, Europe, the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and the Lebanese cinema, broadcasted on the regional news channel nbn. He then created two successive production houses (né.à Beyrouth and LC1 Entertainment) before partnering with Manasvi Gosalia to open the Beirut office of Deja Vu, headquartered in Dubai.

Director’s Note

Should truth buried under the snow be uncovered at the risk of destabilizing the community? This is the challenge that innocent Said will constantly face throughout the five episodes of ‘Faraya’. This existential question holds a very particular connotation in a country still traumatized by its turbulent past, where multiple communities are still struggling to write an official history. In order to reflect the complexity of this society, the second theme central to the series is the relationship with the “other”. And what better way to tackle this relationship than to set the police investigation in the heart of Faraya, the posh ski resort that represents a microcosm of Lebanese society. It brings together high bourgeoisie, politicians, popular classes, outcasts, Syrian refugees, as well as local and foreign workers like Indra, the Ethiopian maid who is found dead at the beginning of the series. Indra is at the lowest rung of the social ladder, yet the discovery of her body will destabilize the entire community and allow the series to reveal the convulsions of human nature in times of major crisis—a human nature that would rather bury the truth in the snow than face it.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Budget: **\$2,175,000**
Secured Financing: **\$232,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Déjà vu Beirut
- Abbout Productions
- Doha Film Institute

Looking For:

- OTT Platforms
- Streaming Services
- Co-producers
- Broadcast
- Distribution

Director / Screenwriter:
Liwaa Yazji
Mohammad Abou Laban

Producer:
Tania El Khoury

Company Profile

Khamsin Films was founded in 2017 with the aim of facilitating 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 for local and international audiences. The company has several ongoing projects from the region including ‘The River’, the newest feature fiction film of Ghassan Salhab, (in post-production) and co-produced with the Postoffice (Lebanon) and Unafilm (Germany), ‘Machtat’, the second feature documentary of Sonia Ben Slama, (in development), co-produced with Alter Ego Production (France) and ‘Heim’, a tv series by Mohammad Abou Laban and Liwaa Yazji (in development).

Contact:
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Khamsin Films
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Heim

Lebanon, Qatar / Arabic, English, German / 45-60 minutes
Genre: **Drama**
Interests: **Immigration**

You can never escape a war. You take it with you wherever you go. All it takes is a handful of secrets and a terrible murder for old scars to turn into fresh wounds, and what at first appears to be Islamist terrorism turns out to be very much worse.



‘Heim’ takes place in a refugee centre in Berlin-Tempelhof airport, which though technically out of service is still “welcoming” different departing and arriving sort of people. They’re not the fancy passersby travelling to their own ends—they’re now deemed refugees whose life practically stopped here, paused on standby mode. The airport is thus a limbo they are stuck in. Not only their destiny is what we see here, but also that of the German characters accompanying them. As the German employees living through this experience are not better off; they are no longer the smartly dressed captains and crews, nothing more than exhausted overworn employees, obsessed with the duty of “protecting” a-la carte this modern Tower of Babel they found themselves part of. It’s a testing ground for different identities and clashing worlds, where people come to the realisation that however much we understand about each other, it’ll never outweigh how much we don’t understand. No one can witness nor come close to this absurdity hoping to stay the same. No one enters this limbo and leaves the same; lives here change completely, once and for all.

Liwaa Yazji



Liwaa Yazji is a filmmaker, poet, playwright and scenarist. She was educated in both English Literature and Theater Studies. Her first documentary ‘Haunted’ (2014) premiered at FID Marseille. She has worked as a script doctor at several pan-Arab companies and wrote the script of the pan-Arab series ‘The Brothers’ (2014). She was an actress in Abdullatif Abdulhamid’s film ‘September Rain’ (2009) and was assistant director on his film ‘Windows of the soul’ (2011). Her play ‘Goats’ premiered in The London Royal Court in November 2017, and her play ‘Q&Q’ premiered at the Birth Festival at The Royal Exchange Theatre in London (2016). A jury member in Freistadt International Film Festival 2016 - feature documentary competition, she was selected for “Arbeitsstipendien nicht deutschsprachige Literatur” (2018, Berlin), to work on her next project ‘Trash’. She is now working on her new feature documentary ‘Hostage’ and co-writing ‘Heim’, a tv series to be produced in Germany.

Mohammad Abou Laban



Screenwriter, poet, playwright and journalist, he was educated in both Philosophy and Theater Studies in Syria. He worked in several tv projects in the Arab World including

tv short films, adaptations and a soap opera, among them ‘The Brothers’, 114 episodes in 2014. In addition to collaborating on several documentary films including ‘Haunted’ (2014). He worked as well in Radio Nacional de España / Arabic section as a journalist, broadcaster, and editor. He has published several poetry collections such as ‘Exercises in Meaningfulness’ (2016), ‘A Passerby Turns’ (2009), ‘Paradox’ (2008), ‘In a While’ (2005), and the theatre work ‘The Last Lover’ (2008). He is also co-founder and editor in the magazine “A Syrious Look”, and the artistic director of the Syrian Mobile Film Festival. He is now co-writing ‘Heim’, a tv series to be produced in Germany.

Tania El Khoury



Tania El Khoury is a producer who studied filmmaking in Beirut and then moved to Paris where she obtained her master’s degree in cinema. She joined the well-established independent production company Moby Dick Films in 2005, with which she worked as legal and financial manager until 2019. Since 2016, she has been producing independently, working between France and Lebanon where she has founded the company Khamsin Films, in 2017.

Director’s Note

‘Heim’ tackles the enormity of human suffering by showing up its absurdity. The microcosm of the contemporary refugee centre is an ideal representation of the Tower of Babel. Many languages are spoken, but few are understood. The message ‘Heim’ wants to get across is that if we can’t live together here, we can’t live together anywhere. The time when it was possible to shut your door, pull the blinds, and only look after yourself, is over. It is a luxury lost in the global age, where space is running out, and we must live together or die together. Ultimately, ‘Heim’ cannot hope to offer a definitive answer to the colossal question it asks, and neither does it need to. Within the scope of a well-wrought, multi-faceted drama, ‘Heim’ can only show that whatever attitude its characters bring to the table at the beginning of their journey, at the end they come to the realisation that however much we understand about each other, it will never outweigh how much we don’t understand, and that this realisation results in a sense of humility that allows us to meet each other with goodwill instead of suspicion.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION Total Budget: **\$57,192**

Looking For:
• Financing
• Co-producers

Director / Screenwriter:
Abdulla Al-Abdulla

Producer:
Basel Owies

Contact:
Basel Owies
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Development / tv Series

The Life of Abdulla (Working Title)

Qatar / Arabic, English / 25 mins
Genre: **Unscripted tv Series**
Interests: **Reality tv, Social Media**

A glimpse into the private lives and exploits of Khaleeji Social Media influencers Fatima Al Momen, Ascia Farraj, Abdulla Al Abdulla, Reem Al Sanea and Hala Abdullah, who juggle their glitzy, fast-paced international lifestyles with the demands of their families and traditions.



In these ten 25-minute episodes, we'll take a journey through the life of Abdulla and other renowned social media influencers from the Middle East. Join as each of the ensemble cast gives exclusive access into their high-end lifestyles, entrepreneurial ventures, management teams and personal lives. In this competitive and cut-throat influencer industry, we'll tag along as they each put their finances, reputations and cultural integrity on the line to burst onto the world stage in style. We'll see high-end magazine photoshoots, international fashion shows, clothing and brands being produced, friendships and relationships being formed (and breaking), all the while the cast is trying to avoid being wrapped up into the haters on social media and the demands of a conservative culture and family. 'In The Life of Abdulla', audiences will join our high-profile influencers as they challenge stereotypes, modernize Middle Eastern fashion and take their influences global despite the preconceived notions of the region.

Abdulla Al-Abdulla



As the son of an ambassador, Abdulla Al-Abdulla grew up travelling the globe and developed a keen interest in the fashion industry. As a Qatari native, Abdulla's style has a quintessential Middle Eastern touch, but still incorporates a vast Western flare. He's a regular at the London, Paris, New York and Milan Fashion Weeks, and has been featured in various publications like Harper's Bazaar, Grazia, Ahlan Magazine and Glam. As a high-profile influencer, Abdulla has collaborated with countless brands such as Louis Vuitton, Dior, Balmain, Etro and Chaumet—where he stands at the crossroads between Middle Eastern and Western culture.

Basel Owies



Born in the USA, Basel Owies studied film at the Dodge College of Media Arts in Orange, CA and has worked in film, tv, commercial, music video and web. He went on to direct and co-produce his first feature film entitled 'The Barber' (2014) starring Scott Glenn ('Silverado', 'Silence of the Lambs') and Chris Coy ('The Deuce', 'The Killing of Two Lovers'). He is currently a full-time producer managing the Qatari Film Fund at the Doha Film Institute in Qatar.

Director's Note

In a world filled with stereotypes and clichés about the Middle East, I wanted to bring the reality of this society into the mainstream global consciousness. I wanted to authentically portray the real Arabia and the real people within. People that are playing a major role in shaping the modern-day world: Influencers. We are young, well-educated socialites from families of means and much like in the West, we use social media as a tool to build our personal brands and promote our lifestyles. This unscripted series seeks to tear down these distorted notions by giving an exclusive all-access pass into the lives of the next generation of fashionable Middle Eastern youth. But unlike other reality shows, we don't want to create a low-brow forced drama type of experience. Instead, we want to showcase the power of friendships across borders, the desire to be ambitious, driven and business-oriented, and to share our microcosm with the world at large. I want to paint this journey through my life, along with the lives of my closest friends who are making an impact with social media, fashion and self-expression. We are the new faces of Arabia.

Looking For:

- Funding
- Distribution
- Broadcast

Director / Screenwriter:
Hicham Lasri

Producer:
Lamia Chraibi

Company Profile

La Prod develops fiction in its broadest sense by combining imagination and rigour without compromise or self-censorship. La Prod accompanies directors in the creative process, including Hicham Lasri, Narjiss Nejjar, Ismaïl Ferroukhi, and Mohcine Besri. The company co-produced Oliver Laxe’s ‘Mimosas’ (Grand Prize of the Critics’ Week at the Cannes Film Festival in 2016) as well as Balint Kenyeres’ ‘Tegnap/Hier’ and has produced various feature film projects and television programs.

Contact:
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La Prod
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Sophia Menni
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Meskoun

Morocco, Lebanon, Tunisia, Egypt, Qatar / Arabic / 60 mins
Genre: **Fantasy**
Interests: **Conflict, Immigration**

Lotfi loses his fiancée and his mind. Deciding to emigrate illegally, he ends up drowning with seven other strangers. A month later, he reappears, buoyed by the souls of the seven drowned people who are now living within him.



While attempting to enter Europe, Lotfi Meskini drowns with seven other unfortunate illegal immigrants from seven different nationalities. A month later, he is thrown back by the sea, with no trace of the others. He begins to realize that he shoulders within him the souls of the other seven passengers who are longing to be released. Lotfi flirts with madness by carrying this heptad of other personalities, each asking him to fulfil their last wish. With seven different “hosts” seeking to see their family, homeland, and children, one last time, Lofti sets off on an epic adventure to the four corners of the Arab and African worlds to grant each their dying wish.

Hicham Lasri



Hicham Lasri is a Moroccan filmmaker and part of the new generation of Moroccan cinema. Born in Casablanca, Morocco in 1977, he studied economy and law then wrote theatre plays, novels and screenplays before turning to film. His debut feature ‘The End’ (2011), about the last days of King Hassan, was acclaimed by critics. In ‘They Are the Dogs’ (2013), he drew parallels between the 2011 Arab Spring and the 1981 “bread riots” in Morocco. The film travelled well through the festivals and received numerous writings from critics. His previous films include ‘The Sea is Behind’ (2014), ‘Starve Your Dog’ (2015), ‘Headbang Lullaby’ (2017), which screened in the Berlinale Panorama section, and ‘Jahilya’ (2018), selected in the Berlinale Forum section.

Lamia Chraibi



Lamia Chraibi is the producer and founder of the production companies Moon a Deal Films, created in 2011 in Paris, and La Prod, created in 2007 in Casablanca. After completing her studies in audiovisual communication management in France, she worked for nine years for various Parisian productions. Lamia develops fiction in its broadest sense by combining imagination and rigour without compromise or self-censorship. She works for a committed, free and independent cinema.

Director’s Note

Ten years ago, I filmed a documentary in Italy about migration between Morocco—specifically in Beni Mellal—and Italy—especially in Turin. Among the six characters that we filmed was a brilliant young man who was in Telquel magazine’s 2008 Power List of “personalities who will make the Morocco of tomorrow”. It was with a cold sadness that I followed him for a few days in his concealed

daily life in Italy, trying to survive by dodging the police and the traps set up by Italian authorities to neutralize illegal migrants. This young man has been swallowed by the modern world; his precariousness emptied him of his ambitions and his dreams as an activist in an NGO. A young man who can no longer find his place at home or the material comfort to campaign in his own country. This story marked me, because the main character is also looking for a place somewhere else, when there are no more chairs at home in his own country, the land of his ancestors. What I admired the most in this young man is his lucidness about the failure of his choice, and also the inevitable side. A kind of Soft Suicide, a way to relocate the pain of failure and decay by drowning it in a dreary daily routine made of meaningless details, deprivation, stress and paranoia. There is truth in this tragic character, in my Lotfi. His desire to abandon himself to a land of exile in order to drown his sorrow, to take great stride in distancing himself, the poem that tears him from the living, putting him on the sidelines with other outcasts, the unsuited for life, the modern time zombies who are chained to their telephone screens.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Budget: **\$510,000**
Secured Financing: **\$190,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- About Productions
- CINETEFILMS
- Film Clinic

Looking For:

- Funding
- Creative Development

Director / Screenwriter :
Erige Sehiri

Co-screenwriter:
Cécile Allegra

Company Profile

Since 2005, Akka Films has dedicated itself to art-house documentaries, fiction films and television programs. Based in Geneva, at the crossroads of Europe, we favour works of international and universal scope, although strongly anchored and incarnated in their regions of origin: powerful, contemporary and singular films carried by an affirmed vision of their authors. This approach naturally leads us to co-produce most of our projects to offer them the widest resonance. Akka Films production board gathers founder and filmmaker Nicolas Wadimoff, and senior producers Philippe Coeytaux and Palmyre Badinier.

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Sophia Menni
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The Source

Tunisia, Switzerland, Qatar / Arabic / 52 mins
Genre: **Drama**
Interests: **Social Issues**

Five childhood friends from Tunisia’s Thala High School, come together to investigate the death of Hicham, an older student. In tracing his footsteps over the months before he disappears, the group discover the world of cyber activists. They leave behind their adolescence and end up on the frontline of the Arab Spring.



November 2010. The Tunisian national anthem rings throughout the Thala High School courtyard. The flag is raised, and the principal announces that Hicham, a former student, has died under “unfortunate” circumstances—running from the police, he had a fatal accident. Five friends listen in silence to the principal’s half-hearted comments. In the middle sits Hamdi, Hicham’s younger brother. Hamdi is distraught. His older brother would never try to escape a situation in which their father, a police commissioner in Thala, could have easily intervened. He wants the truth. But how can you find it in a country that specializes in hiding it? With all the fury and energy of adolescence, Hamdi embarks on this impossible quest, helped by his childhood friends—Raoua the intellectual, Fadi the strategist, Noor the audacious, and Sami the resourceful. Following Hicham’s footsteps, the band leaves Thala to venture further and further from home. They discover the world of cyber activists, and their path ends up crossing that of the historical moment unveiling before them—Bouazizi’s self-immolation, Sidi Bouzid’s uprising, the police’s murderous backlash, and Thala’s own wound—a massacre perpetrated by their own police force. The series ends with a historical scene where the gang runs to catch up with the thousands of protesters on Habib Bourguiba Avenue in Tunis, on January 13th, 2011.

Erige Sehiri



Erige Sehiri is a director and producer, based between France and Tunisia. After ‘The Facebook of My Father’ (2012), she directed her first feature-length documentary in 2018. Presented at Visions du Réel and IDFA, ‘La Voie Normale’ was released in Tunisian theatres, where it remained for six weeks. Since 2011, she has also been active in media education for young people. She is the co-founder of the media group Inkyfada, member of the ICIJ, and head of Henia Production, through which she produces films.

Cécile Allegra



Born in Rome, Cécile Allegra is a director and screenwriter who has won numerous international awards for her documentaries, including the Albert London Prize in 2015 for ‘Under the Skin’. Fellow at the French Cinema School FEMIS (2017)

and winner of the UCLA-Storytelling Institute in Cannes (2019), she is the creator of the series ‘800 Fois le Watergate’ (10x52, which received support from the FAIA) and ‘gomn’ (8x 52). She is currently preparing her first feature film, ‘Vesuvio’, which is produced by Les Films Velvet. A human rights activist, she is the founder of LIMBO, an association that helps survivors of human trafficking in Africa.

Philippe Coeytaux



Born in Geneva, Switzerland in 1965, Philippe Coeytaux has a diploma in business management. At the end of the 1980s, he became an active member of L’Usine, an alternative cultural centre in Geneva. During this same period, he co-founded “Universcity TV”. In 1993, he became the General Coordinator of the DigiMedia conference, organised by ITU, EBU and the University of Geneva. During the same time, he has also been writing articles in various papers, and in 1998 he published the book “Tomorrow, I’ll stop shopping, how to become a cyber-consumer”. Since 1997, Philippe

has held various position in the film, commercial and television production. In 2015, he became a board member of Akka Films as senior producer.

Director’s Note

Erige Sehiri moved to Tunisia in the aftermath of the Revolution. With former cyber activists, she set up youth journalism clubs all over the country. From Sinai to Aswan and Tripoli, Cécile Allegra filmed the bloody exiles of those who cross Africa. They met in Tunis, and realized they shared a similar cinematic vision: to tell the story of a crucial moment— when commitment ends up sweeping up everything in its path. ‘The Source’ brings back to life a historical period rarely shown in cinema and television. The story of the electric tensions in the final weeks of the dictatorship, the rise of revolutionary cyber activism. And this, through the eyes of a group of teenagers. The questionings of young Tunisians in 2011 resonate strongly today, in Algeria, Lebanon, Chile, and elsewhere. ‘The Source’ takes us from town to town, with Hamdi and his friends leaving their nest to reach the breeding ground of the Tunisian Arab Spring—to be remembered as the world’s first “digital revolution.” What leads the five friends to scale the barricades? Throughout the series, ‘The Source’ is about the power of youth when they realize that the world around them is based on lies and injustice.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION Total Budget: **€100,105**

- Looking For:
- French and International co-producers
 - Distribution
 - Broadcast

Director :
Ahmad Satti Ibrahim

Producer:
Nasser Kalaji

Company Profile

Immortal Entertainment is a cultural production company, which has been working closely with some of the biggest names in the industry. In music, Immortal has been commissioned to do work for some of the world's biggest hip-hop stars. Our involvement in film has been extensive, co-owner Laith Majali co-produced and edited 'Captain Abu Raed', Jordan's first feature film in over 60 years, Immortal also co-produced the award-winning, Oscar-nominated feature film 'Theeb'. We have supported our own artist/filmmaker, Satti, for the upcoming web-series, 'The Closet Sessions'. Mama's Productions is an independent music production company founded by Ahmad Yaseen (AKA Satti), focused on quality indie music documentation, striking visuals and an innovative audio perspective.

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The Closet Sessions

Jordan, Qatar / Arabic / 2020 / 10 mins
Genre: **Web Series**
Interests: **Music**

A music web series that documents and showcases the diversity of the music scene in Jordan and the Arab region.



'The Closet Sessions' concept existed ever since hip-hop artist and director Ahmad "Satti" Ibrahim used to record his songs at the beginning of his career inside his closet, for best acoustic results. 'The Closet Sessions' is a bi-monthly web-series with a high-production value and a cozy feel, where local, regional and international artists come and experiment with genres in a walk-in closet. This concludes with quality-recorded intimate live music sessions, accessible to the world on the YouTube platform. From indie ballads & ethnic folk, jazz, rock and electronic sets—'The Closet Sessions' crew paint a canvas of musical colours for everyone to explore. Along the process of highlighting the layers of Jordan's multicultural music scene, comes the regional and international music projects that complement the overall canvas of the current scene. 'The Closet Sessions' universal concept is not new, but it is the first of its kind in the Middle East, uplifting the musical scene and contributing to the universal dialogue of cultural production.

Ahmad Satti Ibrahim



Ahmad Satti Ibrahim, better known as "Satti", is a Jordanian rapper, songwriter and filmmaker raised

in Irbid in the north of Jordan. Satti began releasing his music in 2011, which led to fruitful collaborations. Immortal Entertainment produced his debut album 'Groom of the North' in March 2017. As a carpenter, Satti got involved in film in Jordan first as an art assistant/construction manager, and then a props master. After that, he became a production manager and assistant director on over ten feature films shot in Jordan. Satti directs his own music videos and just wrapped the first season of his music web-series.

Director's Note

For years, I've been living two separate lives; one as a musician and the other as a freelance filmmaker. Creating 'The Closet Sessions' has given me the opportunity to achieve my dream of combining both of my passions into one world. While the musical audio content in the region is abundant, the visuals are lacking. I plan to invest my talents to strengthen the visual content to mirror and document the beauty of the music that each region has to offer. The desire to create powerful visuals to complement music comes from my own experience of listening to a new album and skipping through songs I haven't felt a connection with. Then later having my perception completely reshaped by visualizing that track. I have established some connections with the Gulf region and Europe to take 'The Closet' on tour, where it is shaped and structured by the inspiration of each independent music scene in each region we tap into. I have done my research and developed a solid concept that I am committed to seeing succeed. I am a man on a mission to create something unique for my community, my country, my region and the world at large.


FINANCIAL INFORMATION Total Budget: **\$63,000**

Looking For:
● Financing

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