
Grants Catalogue 2018

مؤسسة الدوحة للأفلام

DOHA FILM INSTITUTE

Table of Contents

Message from the CEO

Grants Programme Team

Feature Narrative

Feature Documentary / Feature Experimental or Essay

Short Narrative / Short Experimental or Essay

TV and Web Series

**Film Funding
Doha Film Institute Grants
Programme
2018**

The Doha Film Institute's Grants Programme is a unique resource for the next generation of filmmakers from the Arab world and beyond. It is a manifestation of a shared vision, ours and that of the filmmakers we support, to tell bold stories through films that help us understand what it means to be human.

Discovering and supporting emerging talent in film is central to our mission to bring new voices to cinema and, though our remit is global, we are especially keen to highlight perspectives from the Arab World. We support filmmakers from Qatar and the wider region to highlight our distinct cultural identity, celebrate our values, and explore our commonalities.

The Grants Programme was established eight years ago, and over the years we have supported more than 450 films representing over 60 countries. We are incredibly proud of our grantee alumni – many of whom have earned critical acclaim for their creativity and ambition – and we look forward to welcoming more filmmakers into our family.

These past two sessions of the DFI Grants Programme add new members to our grantee alumni with an expertly curated selection of 72 projects from over 20 countries. The selection includes films by first- and second-time filmmakers as well as projects by established directors from the region, and 32 films by women filmmakers.

For the first time, DFI grants were also awarded for TV and web series helmed by MENA scriptwriters and directors, with two projects in each category, highlighting the Institute's commitment to support compelling multi-platform storytelling that exemplifies emerging industry trends.

We are delighted that seven projects by Qatari directors are included in the line-up. These filmmakers are a testament to the ever-growing talent pool

that exists in our country, and it gives me great pride to see them succeed in their determination to make meaningful films about their experience. Supporting their vision is an integral part of our goal to nurture the local film industry in Qatar.

The diversity of this year's projects combined is incredible. Each project, from Afghanistan to Brazil and Lesotho to Russia, tells an important story that is specific to its local context but also universal. All projects tell inspirational tales – of hope, self-discovery, empowerment, family life, and life in conflict zones – that present new perspectives on humanity. The submissions for this year have been nothing short of exceptional, and the chosen 72 projects represent the very best in compelling filmmaking.

Covering all genres and experimenting with narrative styles, the DFI Grants Programme recipients are pushing the boundaries of cinema and adding to its diversity. It is with great pleasure that I welcome them to the DFI family, and I wish them the very best for their projects and their endeavours to share our distinct voices and cultural identity with the world.

- Fatma Hassan Al Remaihi
CEO, Doha Film Institute

Doha Film Institute
Grants Team

Hanaa Issa, Director of Strategy and Development

Khalil Benkirane, Head of Grants

Meriem Mesraoua, Grants Senior Coordinator

Vanessa Paradis, Grants Coordinator

Wesam Said, Grants Coordinator

Feature Narrative

200 Meters

Adam

The Alleys

Barzakh (working title)

Behind Closed Doors

Beirut 1931

Costa Brava Lebanon

Girl Made of Dust

Haifa Street

Happy Holidays

Harvest

Interpret

In Vitro

The Last Queen

Long Day's Journey into Night

Longer Will Be the Night

Mama, Where Are You?

Mediterranean Fever

My Little One

Sanctorum

Severed Head

Sirena

Sister

Tlamest

Unremember

Where Did I Leave My Face?

You Have the Night

Production

Feature Narrative

Spring Grants 2018

Ameen Nayfeh

Director / Screenwriter



May Odeh

Producer



Contact

Odeh Films

May Odeh

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200 Meters

Palestine, Jordan, France, Germany, Italy, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 90

Genre: Drama, Road Trip

A Palestinian man, living on the West Bank and separated from his hospitalised son by the wall, must embark on a harrowing journey to see him. A distance of 200 meters becomes a 200-kilometre odyssey.



Mustafa and his wife Salwa come from two Palestinian villages that are only 200 meters apart, but separated by the wall. Their unusual living situation is starting to affect their otherwise happy marriage, but the couple does what they can to make it work. Every night, Mustafa flashes a light from his balcony to wish his children on the other side a goodnight, and they signal him back. One day Mustafa gets a call that every parent dreads, his son has been in an accident. He rushes to the checkpoint where he must agonisingly wait in line only to find out there is a problem with his fingerprints and is denied entry. Desperate, Mustafa resorts to hiring a smuggler to bring him across. His once 200-meter journey becomes a 200-kilometre odyssey joined by other travellers determined to cross.

Director's Note

'200 Meters' is my story and the story of thousands of Palestinians. Images of the wall, checkpoints and soldiers are probably what comes to mind whenever Palestine is mentioned. Although these images are also in this film, the focus will be on what such a separation does to us as human beings, shedding more light on the invisible barriers that are created as a result of this physical barrier. Here in Palestine, we got used to adapting to new situations, to do as we're told and camouflage our feelings. But this should never be acceptable. Freedom of movement is a fundamental human right that seems to be a fairytale in such a brutal reality. The main character has obeyed the rules, endured the humiliation and did as he was told in order to secure the possibility to be with his family, but when the same rules that alienated his life put his family and fatherhood at stake, will he obey them any longer?

Director's Biography

Ameen Nayfeh was born in Palestine in 1988. In 2012, he graduated with an MFA from the Red Sea Institute of Cinematic Arts in Jordan with the goal of telling authentic stories from his region. He has written, produced and directed award-winning short films, and has been freelancing in film and TV production for the past six years.

Company Profile

Odeh Films is an independent film production company based in Ramallah. The company focuses on producing creative documentary and author-driven narrative films. Odeh Films also provides production services for filmmakers shooting in Palestine, as well as distribution for independent films.

Production

Feature Narrative

Spring Grants 2018

Maryam Touzani

Director / Screenwriter



Nabil Ayouch

Producer



Adam

Morocco, France, Belgium, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 100

Genre: Drama, Family, Psychological, Women's Issues

Samia, eight months pregnant and unwed, has decided to give up her child for adoption. When she knocks on Abla's door, a hard-working widow, both their lives will change forever.



Abla runs a modest local bakery from her home in Casablanca where she lives alone with her 8-year-old daughter, Warda. When Samia, a young pregnant woman knocks on their door, Abla is far from imagining that her life will change forever. A random encounter of fate, two women on the run, and an essential journey.

Contact

Ali n' Productions

Amine Benjelloun

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Director's Note

Adam is a film reflecting the struggles of two women and a girl in a context that can sometimes be extremely cruel. As a filmmaker, I feel it is necessary to give a voice to those whom society often tries to shut down, to give a face to their hardships, to their battles, to their hopes. 'Adam' is a story born from a real encounter, a painful but inspiring one, whose indelible marks resurface today in the hope of shedding light upon a truth that deserves to be heard, but that is too often buried. But for me, Adam is above all a film about the humanity in each and every one of us. Today, I feel ready to bring this film to life, to fulfil my part in the sharing of this story, as a human being, as a woman, and as a filmmaker.

Director's Biography

Born in 1980, **Maryam Touzani** spent her childhood in her native Tangier before pursuing a university degree in London. 'When they slept' (2012), her first short fiction, travelled around the world through prestigious festivals, winning a total of seventeen awards. In 2015, her second short fiction, 'Aya Goes to the Beach' won a large number of awards worldwide. Through film director Nabil Ayouch's greatly acclaimed 'Much Loved' (2015), she takes her experience further, first by contributing with him to the development of the script and secondly by working on the set as artistic director. Soon after, she co-writes with Nabil Ayouch on his latest feature, 'Razzia'.

Company Profile

Ali n' Productions was created in 1999 by filmmaker Nabil Ayouch. The company operates in different areas of the audiovisual sector, becoming famous by producing feature-films such as 'Ali Zaoua' (1999), 'Une Minute de Soleil en Moins' (2003), 'Whatever Lola wants', 'On the Wire', 'Mawazine - Rabat: le centre du monde', and 'My Land'.

Production

Feature Narrative
Fall Grants 2018

Bassel Ghandour

Director / Screenwriter



Rula Nasser

Producer



Contact

The Imaginarium Films
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The Alleys

'Al za'qaq' / Jordan, France, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 90

Genre: Drama, Social Issues

In a claustrophobic East-Amman neighbourhood where gossip and violence police people's behaviour, the lives of residents intertwine and collide as some try to maintain social norms, while others try to break them.



In a claustrophobic East Amman neighbourhood, where life is dictated by gossip and violence, Ali, a hustler who pretends to be a white-collar career man, has a secret relationship with Lana, a young college student. Their romance is kept hidden until one day Lana's mother, Aseel, receives an extortionist video of the young couple. Hoping to avoid public embarrassment, Aseel discreetly convinces Abaas, a ruthless gangster, to put a stop to it... but things do not go so smoothly. Their lives start to intertwine and collide not just with each other, but with the other residents living amongst the same Alleys.

Director's Note

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts". My hope in intertwining stories of my characters is that it will tell the greater narrative of their neighbourhood. A claustrophobic place where gossip and violence dictate life, and the truth is always impossible to attain. I hope to dive past what is presented on the surface, beyond the image people want to show to the world, and unmask what is hidden. A world that is always being pushed and pulled by what is being whispered on the streets.

Director's Biography

After graduating from the University of Southern California with a BA in Cinematic Arts, **Bassel Ghandour** worked as a production assistant on a number of feature films, including 'The Hurt Locker' (Kathryn Bigelow, 2008) and 'Captain Abu Raed' (Amin Matalqa, 2007). Bassel later wrote and produced the feature film 'Theeb' (Naji Abu Nowar, 2014), nominated in 2016 for Best Foreign Language Film at both the Academy Awards and the BAFTAs. It also won the Best British Newcomer at the latter. Bassel is also the head writer on the first Arabic series developed by Netflix, 'Jinn' (2018-), and wrote and directed the short film 'Freekeh' (2018).

Company Profile

Jordanian producer Rula Nasser founded The Imaginarium Films in 2010, one of the most renowned production companies in Jordan today. Specialized in feature films, Imaginarium has produced many award-winning films among them, Yahya Alabdallah's 'The Last Friday' (2011), Bassam Chekes' 'Waiting for POBOX' and Mais Darwazah's 'My Love Awaits Me by the Sea'. The company also line produced films for many international directors such as Hany Abu Assad, Mijke de Jong, Mia Hansen-Love and Xavier Giannoli.

Production

Feature Narrative

Fall Grants 2018

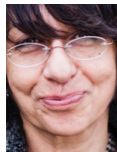
Laila Abbas

Director / Screenwriter



Roshanak Behesht Nedjad

Producer



Contact

In Good Company Films
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Barzakh (working title)

Palestine, Germany, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 90

Genre: Drama, Social Issues, Women's Issues

Mariam and Noura's father dies alone in his old house. Discovering the possibility of a large inheritance, the sisters must keep his death a secret in order to withdraw it from his account.



Mariam and Noura find their old father dead in his house on the outskirts of the city of Ramallah. While waiting for the hospital to pick him up, Noura finds her father's ATM card along with the 4-digit pin code. Since Noura is broke, she convinces her sister to run to the ATM and get some money out. The good news is there is much more money than they thought. The bad news is they can only withdraw \$3,000 per day. If their brother in America finds out, he's entitled by law to half of this money. The sisters spend the coming two nights plotting to find a way to hide their father's death and body. But for their plan to work, they need to stay away from the old woman living downstairs—who turns out to be an unlikely ally along the way.

Director's Note

'Barzakh' is a Palestinian story about two women struggling and yearning for control over their lives and futures. Prior to their father's death, their lives and actions were greatly influenced by him. With the death of the patriarch, these two women will defy and outsmart the system that degrades them and sees them as inferior. This film sets out to question the inheritance laws in Palestine and most Arab countries through a thrilling drama that doesn't shy away from humour.

Director's Biography

Laila Abbas is a Palestinian filmmaker and academic. She started her career in TV, but her passion for storytelling drove her to pursue writing and filmmaking. She studied Film and TV producing at Royal Holloway University in the UK. Upon returning to Palestine, Laila worked as an instructor at the Institute of Modern Media at Alquds University for five years. Laila wrote and directed a documentary and a number of short fiction films.

Company Profile

In Good Company was founded in 2015 in Berlin and focuses on international co-productions, aiming to create films that entertain on an intellectual level. Therefore, storytelling is in the foreground as well as an understanding of who the audiences of the respective films are and how to reach them. Together, the founders have received numerous awards with their respective productions, among them the European Film Award, the German Film Award, and an Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Film. In Good Company has an extensive international network within the film industry that guarantees additional resources and access to talents and financing.

Development

Feature Narrative

Spring Grants 2018

Hend Fakhroo

Director / Screenwriter



Behind Closed Doors

Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 120

Genre: Family, Women's Issues, Psychological Drama

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.

Contact

Hend Fakhroo

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Director's Note

This film takes an intimate look at members of a Qatari family all centring around the father figure. It highlights 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.

Director's Biography

Hend Fakhroo is a Qatari writer and director. She graduated with honours in 2005 with a marketing degree from St Edward's University in Austin, Texas. Her first short film, 'His Name' (2012), screened at various international festivals, including the Short Film Corner at the 67th Festival de Cannes, the Doha Tribeca Film Festival and the River Film Festival. Her second film, 'The Waiting Room' (2016), had its home premiere in two competitions at the Ajyal film festival in Doha, and its international premiere, also in competition, at the Dubai International Film Festival. It was screened at the 70th Festival de Cannes Short Film Corner, and was also officially selected at the Beirut International Film Festival, as well as the Malmo Arab Film Festival. In 2017, Hend directed a visual campaign for Salam Stores in Qatar, and she is currently developing her first feature-length film.

Development

Feature Narrative

Fall Grants 2018

Kamal Aljafari

Director / Screenwriter



Beirut 1931

Palestine, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 90

Genre: Drama, Exile, Family

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.

Contact

Kamal Aljafari

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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?

Director's Biography

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.

Production

Feature Narrative

Fall Grants 2018

Mounia Akl

Director / Co-screenwriter



Clara Roquet

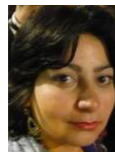
Co-screenwriter



Georges Schoucair,

Myriam Sassine

Producers



Contact

About Productions

Myriam Sassine

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Costa Brava Lebanon

Lebanon, France, Sweden, Norway, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 90

Genre: Drama, Social Issues

Set in the near future, the Badri family lives an idyllic, isolated life in the Lebanese mountains away from the country's pollution, until one day the government decides to build a landfill right beside their house.



Lebanon, 2028. The country is drowning in garbage, yet the Badri family leads an idyllic, isolated life in their house in the mountains, which they've turned into a sterile space. Despite the strict rules imposed by the father, Walid to make this exile possible, love abounds in the household. His wife, Soraya, and his daughters, Tala and Rim, seem happy. On the other hand, Walid's mother, Zeina, misses the city life. Following years of paralysis, the government finds a solution to the crisis, but it's not good news for the Badris. A landfill will be built outside their land, hosting all the trash that piled up for years. Hidden tensions among the family members arise and make them realise the rot was not only outside their home.

Director's Note

I was born the year the Lebanese civil war ended. In these post-war years, I observed the fear of my parents' generation, their desire to dissociate. My parents couldn't deal with the trauma. They were overprotective and secluded my sister and I, convincing us the only safe place was home. However, when their marriage crumbled, our safe place exploded driving us to reinvent our home and enter the real world. Since these times, Lebanon has struggled to find its balance. Grudges, corruption, culminating in the irreversible garbage crisis that peaked in 2015. Ironically, I kept creating parallels between the country and my home. Every time Lebanon suffered, my family suffered. My home was a microcosm of Lebanon. In 'Costa Brava Lebanon', when the Badris' utopia is broken, the invasion will drive its members to extreme versions of themselves, awakening repressed feelings, making them realise the rot was also inside their home.

Director's Biography

Mounia Akl is a Lebanese director and writer. She holds an MFA in Directing from Columbia University. Her short film, 'Submarine' (2016), was in the official selection of the 69th Cannes Film Festival (Cinéfondation), South by Southwest, TIFF and DIFF where it won the Muhr Jury Prize. In 2017, Mounia took part in the Lebanon Factory and co-directed the short film 'El Gran Libano' which opened the Directors' Fortnight at the 70th Cannes Film Festival. Mounia recently completed the Cannes Film Festival's Cinéfondation Residency in Paris with her first feature, 'Costa Brava Lebanon'.

Company Profile

About Productions produces feature films and documentaries with a distinctly Arab voice, expressing the identity of the region. Since 1998, the company has managed to bring together an important network of Arab and Lebanese artists, and produced award-winning films such as Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige's 'A Perfect Day' (2005), 'I Want to See' (2008), and 'The Lebanese Rocket Society' (2012); Ghassan Salhab's 'The Last Man' (2006) and 'The Valley' (2014); Georges Hashem's 'Stray Bullet' (2010); Hany Tamba's 'Melodrama Habibi' (2007); Mohamad Malas's 'Ladder to Damascus' (2013); Vatche Boulghourjian's 'Tramontane' (2016); Rana Eid's 'Panoptic' (2017); Mohamed Siam's 'Amal' (2017); and Badih Massaad and Antoine Waked's 'A Certain Nasser' (2017). About Productions has a strong partnership with MC Distribution, a company dedicated to promoting new films from the Middle East along with direct and priority access to the sole art-house theatre in Lebanon, Metropolis Cinema. The company's main objective remains to help structure Lebanese and Arab cinema craft into a solid industry.

Production

Feature Narrative

Spring Grants 2018

Hiam Abbass

Director



Steve Hawes

Screenwriter



Sabine Sidawi

Producer



Contact

Orjouane Productions

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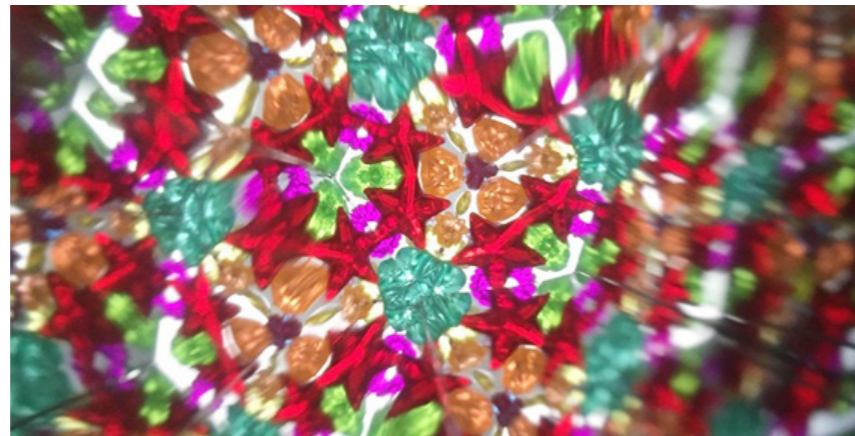
Girl Made of Dust

'Ghoubar Al Toufoula' / Palestine, Lebanon, France, Germany, Denmark, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 100

Genre: Coming of Age, Drama, War, Adaptation, Family

In a Lebanese village where the ravages of war draw closer every day, ten-year-old Ruba escapes into her imagination in order to save her family.



In a village of the Lebanese Chouf, ten-year-old Ruba lives in a dream world filled with witches and fantasies she shares with her friend Karim. However, her "joie de vivre" and little girl's world is gradually being overwhelmed by her precarious family situation and the encroaching war. Naji, her elder brother, is keeping bad company and dangerously moving away from his family and towards the abyss. As for her dear uncle Wadih, his openly comfortable lifestyle in this decaying environment raises many concerns. Fortunately, Teta, her loving grandmother, looks after Ruba and desperately tries to protect what is left of her childhood. Despite this, Ruba slowly becomes acutely aware of the imminent danger of war, and in her own way, she helps her family through their times of adversity.

Director's Note

The war has engulfed my childhood. 'Girl Made of Dust' brings back these adolescence years set between parallel worlds. The first abrupt and brutal, in which life is devastated by war, the other naive, fantasized by images and childhood magic, my only bastion against human frenzy. The purpose of this film is to focus on the child who suffers this war, her perception, and the imaginary world she develops. Everything is perceived from her point of view. In the imaginary world of Ruba, Ali's glass eye as well as the kaleidoscope become her talisman to encourage her in her quest, and allow her progressively to be aware of a new reality, that of war. This film is a fairy tale, Ruba's world is a dream world, made of bright, strong colours, their omnipresence is her refuge, it's the reason why I would like to keep the mise-en-scene understated and sober.

Director's Biography

Born in Nazareth, **Hiam Abbass** studied theatre. As an actor, she has mostly travelled with companies in Europe, moving to Paris to work with Théâtre du Soleil. During her film career, she has worked with Christophe Ruggia, Amos Gitai, Patrice Chéreau, Eran Riklis, Julian Schnabel, Hani Abu Assad, and Ridley Scott. She has directed two shorts, and a feature film, 'Heritage' released in 2013, in which she plays one of the leading roles.

Company Profile

Created in 2007 and managed by Sabine Sidawi, Orjouane Productions specialises in the production of feature fiction and documentary films. The team is composed of three dynamic women, Jinane Dagher, Renata Rahme and Sabine Sidawi, who cover all aspects of production while working closely with different Lebanese and European filmmakers and technicians. Since 2007, they have produced and co-produced several films and documentaries.

Post-Production

Feature Narrative

Spring Grants 2018

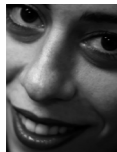
Mohanad Hayal

Director / Co-screenwriter



Hala Alsalman

Producer / Co-screenwriter



Ali Raheem

Producer



Contact

Hala Alsalman

Dream Productions

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Haifa Street

Iraq, Qatar / Arabic / 2019

Runtime: 70

Genre: Thriller, War, Family, Psychological Drama

A vindictive sniper on Haifa Street in Baghdad shoots a man in broad daylight, preventing anyone from retrieving the body under the threat of gunfire.



It's 2006 and Baghdad is ravaged by sectarian violence. Haifa Street is the epicentre of the conflict, with masked gunmen and snipers reigning down terror for reasons and political allegiances that are unclear. When Ahmed gets dropped off there by taxi on his way to his beloved Suad's house to ask for her hand in marriage, he gets shot by Salam, an anxious young sniper who's living his own personal hell on a rooftop above. Suad desperately tries to save Ahmed, but Salam prevents anyone from approaching him under the threat of gunfire. When her daughter Nadia elicits the help of their cunning neighbour Dalal, all hell breaks loose under the ominous presence of the American occupation.

Director's Note

In 2006, Haifa street became a theatre for a civil war which lasted for two years. It went from being home to the most important university professors and intellectuals in Baghdad to a street of death, lined with snipers and dead bodies. This film is based on a ten-minute experience I had there in 2006, when a stranger walking by my side got shot by a sniper and dropped dead in front of my eyes. A hail of bullets came upon me from everywhere, and I quickly found refuge in a house nearby. I was shocked to learn that the people who sheltered me were the dead man's relatives. Paralyzed with fear, all I could do was watch them frantically struggle in vain to collect his body without getting killed. This film is my attempt to make sense of that terrifying experience and everything it symbolised, from the absurdity of war to the way it scars everyone involved.

Director's Biography

Mohanad Hayal was born in 1985 in Iraq. After graduating from Baghdad University's Faculty of Fine Arts in cinema, he gained considerable experience working as assistant director on many Arabic feature films. He has made a number of short and documentary films. His film 'Happy Birthday' was selected for the 2013 Berlin International Film Festival and received the Rising Star Award at the 2013 Rhode International Film Festival. Hayal is a seasoned journalist and is currently a freelance war videographer, documenting battles between the Iraqi Army and ISIS. He resides and works in Baghdad, also conducting filmmaking workshops as one of the founders of the Iraqi Independent Film Centre. He was Salam Salman's script and production advisor on his short film 'Gift from my Father' which went on to win the 2015 Crystal Bear Award for the Best Short Film at the Berlin International Film Festival.

Company Profile

Dream Productions is a Baghdad-based production house specialising in thought-provoking fiction films and documentary shows for television. The company has produced several short films and documentaries, the most recent of which was the short film 'Life in Darkness' (2017). They are also currently in production of the docudrama TV series 'Heroes of Iraq'. 'Haifa Street' is the company's first foray into feature films.

Production

Feature Narrative
Fall Grants 2018

Scandar Copti

Director / Screenwriter



Tony Copti

Producers



Contact

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Happy Holidays

'Yanead ealaykum' / Palestine, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 110

Genre: Drama, Social Issues, Identity

A student's involvement in a minor accident sets off a chain reaction of events that leads to the exposition of her double life, as well as the double lives of some of her relatives.



Director's Note

Submerged in the realms of racism, militarism, and victimhood, 'Happy Holidays' brings a fresh and indexical image of the interdependence between the Palestinian subculture and the dominant Israeli culture. This image exposes the different processes of the construction of reality in each society and its mutual influence on ordinary people from all sides—men and women, mothers and daughters, fathers and sons, Arabs and Jews.

Director's Biography

Scandar Copti is a Palestinian filmmaker and visual artist, known for his film 'Ajami' (2009) that has won more than 15 awards, including the Camera d'Or Special Mention at Cannes, as well as a nomination for the 82nd Academy Awards. Copti's video art projects have been exhibited worldwide at venues such as Gutman Museum, NYU gallery at Abu Dhabi, b_tour Foothold Festival, Beit Alkarmeh and the Oslo Kunstforening Art Gallery, among others. Copti headed the Film and New Media program at NYU Abu Dhabi from 2014 to 2017, and he's currently teaching at NYUAD and working on his film 'Happy Holidays'.

Company Profile

In 2011, Tony and his brother Jiries joined forces and created Fresco Films—a fresh and dynamic company that specializes in developing and producing feature films having in mind the general audience as well as the highest artistic value of the project. Fresco Films provides hands-on production services with finance structuring. Many of our clients are international feature film and television production companies. We provide comprehensive, turnkey production and location support for shooting in Israel, the West Bank and Jordan. Work includes; 'The Attack' by Ziad Doueiri produced by Jean Brehat, 3B productions and 'Girrafada' by Rani Massalha produced by Antoine de Clermont-Tonnerre, MACT productions.

Production

Feature Narrative

Spring Grants 2018

Ely Dagher

Director / Screenwriter



Arnaud Dommerc

Producer



Harvest

Lebanon, France, Belgium, USA, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 100

Genre: Identity, Psychological Drama

After a long absence, a young woman suddenly returns home and finds herself reconnecting with the familiar, yet strange life she had once left.



A young woman walks out of the Beirut airport alone and makes her way back home to her parents' house in the middle of the night. Having been abroad and out of touch for a while, Jana seems to be leaving a bad experience behind and taking refuge. Haunting pressures to fit back into the family dynamics as well as revealing details of her life abroad weigh heavy on her. Feeling cornered, her fears and anxieties resurface, leading her to reconnect and find solace in another part of her Beirut life that she had forsaken. A life that is for her as familiar and foreign now as it ever was.

Contact

Andolfi Production

Arnaud Dommerc

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Director's Note

'Harvest' is based on themes previously treated in my short film 'Waves '98'. It follows Jana's return home after years abroad. Through her, we draw a portrait of a generation and the story of Beirut. Identity and its construction via history, memory and fiction have been a driving theme in my work since the first time I travelled outside of Lebanon in 2007 and encountered immigrant populations in Europe, witnessing what they chose to construct their identities with. This film is not about that construct, but it is very much about identity and the refusal of the status that is projected on you, be it by others or yourself, and the subsequent loss of self when things fall apart. It is an exploration of the human condition that is not only outwardly psychological, but also told through expressing the inner thoughts of the characters.

Director's Biography

Ely Dagher is an artist and filmmaker born and raised in Lebanon. He Graduated with an MA in New Media and Contemporary Art Studies from Goldsmiths College in London. His work explores the correlation and possibilities created through the play between cultures, histories and fiction. In 2015, his film 'Waves '98' was awarded the short film Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival.

Company Profile

Andolfi is an independent production company lead by Arnaud Dommerc. The company produces authors from every nationality, willing to explore new narrative and cinematographic aspects. Andolfi intends to claim a production eclecticism that allows their different projects to communicate and embrace the complete field of cinema; Live action, experimental, and documentary. 'Félicité' by Alain Gomis (Silver Bear Grand Jury Prize at Berlin Film Festival 2017) and the documentary 'The Graduation' by Claire Simon (Best documentary on cinema - Venice Classics Awards - Venice Film Festival 2016) are a few of the company's latest examples.

Development

Feature Narrative

Spring Grants 2018

Ali Kareem Obaid

Director / Screenwriter / Producer



Giulia Giorgi

Producer



Contact

Baburka Production

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Interpret

'Terjm' / Iraq, Italy, Germany, Qatar / Arabic, German

Runtime: 95

Genre: Drama, Social Issues, Immigration, Identity

To secure his stay in Germany, Hassan, an Iraqi student, starts working as a translator for Arabic-speaking refugees. A job that will lead him into an inner conflict, as his past and present collide.



After living a relatively normal life as a student studying in Berlin, Hassan reluctantly accepts work as a translator for refugees in a psychological rehabilitation centre. Little does he know that for him it will turn out to be just another war. The stories he translates, day after day, take him back to Iraq. To a past, he thought he left behind him. A past which he managed, somehow, to forget for a while. Hassan's inner conflict does not go unnoticed by the psychiatrist with whom he is working, and following the advice to face his past, Hassan begins to write his memories down. While confronting himself with his previous life, growing up during four significant wars, he starts to find himself once again.

Director's Note

I and Hassan, the protagonist of this film, belong to the generation of those born in Iraq in the 1980s. This generation was witness to the most important events in the recent history of Iraq. Our generation is completely different than the ones before and after because of living through five wars. This has not only changed our lives completely, but has also changed the future of the Middle East, with their effects still being felt today.

Director's Biography

Ali Kareem Obaid, born 1984, is an Iraqi director and screenwriter. In 2011, he graduated as Theater Director from the Academy of Fine Arts, Baghdad University. In 2016, he finished his Masters in Choreography and Performance at the Institute for Applied Theatre Studies, Gießen University in Germany. His first short film 'Hassan in Wonderland' has been at 54 film festivals around the world, winning multiple awards, including the Van Gogh Award for the Best Family Film from the Amsterdam Film Festival. His latest short film 'Abraham' (2017) won the Grand Jury Prize from the Peoples and Religions at the Terni Film Festival.

Company Profile

Baburka Production is a film company made up of professionals who share a common goal to produce new ideas to the highest-level with a genuine passion for cinema. Baburka Production is not a simple production company, but one that promotes a new vision of sustainable and high-quality independent cinema. It stands apart not just due to its efficiency and professionalism, but also its valuable national and international know-how, and strong networking skills.

Development

Feature Narrative

Fall Grants 2018

Larissa Sansour

Director / Co-screenwriter



Soren Lind

Co-screenwriter



Palmyre Badinier

Producer



Contact

Akka Films

Palmyre Badinier

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In Vitro

'Al'iirth' / Palestine, Switzerland, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 90

Genre: Drama, Science Fiction, Identity, Social Issues, Environmental

After an eco-apocalypse, the dying founder of a vast underground orchard passes on instructions to her younger successor who was born underground, making her a stranger to the place she is destined to rebuild.



In a converted nuclear reactor, 70-year-old Dunia, the dying founder of a hi-tech orchard, passes on instructions to her younger successor Alia. The aim is to cultivate a replica ecosystem and replant the soil above. As preparations for resurfacing are underway, the intimate dialogue between the two scientists reveals stories of the past, the environmental disaster as well as their personal and collective loss. Alia is born underground as part of a cloning program, an entire generation reborn from the remnants of those lost in the apocalypse. She struggles with her memories, recalling situations and scenes from life above ground, although she has never experienced it. As Dunia's stories from the world before the apocalypse become eerily familiar, Alia becomes intrigued by an early DNA memory encoding program. She starts questioning her origins, forcing Dunia to reveal it to her.

Director's Note

Central to my practice is the push and pull between fiction and reality in a Middle Eastern context. A recent interest is the dialectics between myth and history. In a recent body of works, I have been exploring the sci-fi genre. In the case of Palestine, there is an eternal sense of forecasting independence while remembering the past which lends itself well to the odd mix of ambition and nostalgia that sci-fi often embodies. 'In Vitro' being my most ambitious project to date, the film will merge personal and collective history, sci-fi, biblical narratives and myth to conjure up a novel take on the Palestinian experience. By adding fragments from my own family history, 'In Vitro' is a highly personal film with the ambition to bring Arabic futurism to a broader audience.

Director's Biography

Larissa Sansour is an artist and director born in 1973 in East Jerusalem, Palestine. In her recent works, she uses science fiction to address social and political issues. Working mainly with film, Sansour also produces installations, photos and sculptures. Her work is shown in film festivals and museums worldwide. She has exhibited her work at Tate Modern, MoMA, the Berlinale and BFI London Film Festival. Recent solo exhibitions include 'Bluecoat' in Liverpool, 'Chapter' in Cardiff and 'Nikolaj Kunsthal' in Copenhagen. Sansour currently lives and works in London, UK.

Company Profile

Founded in 2002 by director and producer Nicolas Wadimoff, and recently joined by Philippe Coeytaux and Palmyre Badinier, Geneva-based production house AKKA Films is dedicated to art-house documentaries, series and fiction films. Films ingrained in social debates that reflect and question stakes of the world of today, exploring audacious and original ways of cinematographic expression. Openness on the world and discovery of the other have led AKKA Films to co-produce most of its films internationally and to promote their distribution worldwide.

Production

Feature Narrative

Spring Grants 2018

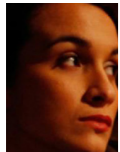
Damien Ounouri

Director / Co-screenwriter



Adila Bendimerad

Co-screenwriter / Producer



Contact

Taj Intaj

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The Last Queen

'Akhir Malika' / Algeria, France, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 105

Genre: Women, War, Historical Drama

Algiers, at the beginning of the 16th century. After the death of her husband, a queen must stand up to the most fearsome pirate.



It is the year 1516. Algiers is a small Arabian-Berber republic, suffocated by the Spaniards, who have had control of the harbour for six years. King Salim Toumi allies with the pirate Aroudj Barberousse in order to free the city. After their victory, Salim is assassinated in his bathtub. Barberousse becomes the new ruler of Algiers, and is confronted with a rebellion. Both history and legend tell that Salim Toumi, the last King of Algiers, had a wife named Zaphira, and that Aroudj Barberousse desired her, famously saying "I will take his palace, and I will mount his horse and his wife."

Director's Note

The film is set in 16th century Algiers, a time of political and social upheaval, an identity crisis, out of which emerged the foundations of a new Algiers. How can we bring to life this period of history that has been ignored for so long, and how can we tell the story of this Last Queen, this woman whose very existence has never ceased to be both disputed and upheld by historians through the centuries? The novelistic and baroque narrative is told from the female point of view, attempting to capture these expunged voices, in order to explore history from a different angle. To travel far back in time, back to a multi-cultural, ambitious and adventurous Algiers, to return and shake up contemporary Algeria, to refresh her memory and stir up her desire and her imagination.

Director's Biography

Born in Clermont-Ferrand, France, **Damien Ounouri** is a graduate of the Sorbonne and currently conducts cinema workshops for children and teenagers in both France and Algeria. He has made the short documentaries 'Changping Sonata' (2007) and 'Away from Nedjma' (2009), and the feature-length documentary 'Xiao Jia Going Home' (2008), about Chinese director Jia Zhang-ke, which screened at a dozen festivals.

Company Profile

Taj Intaj is a cinematographic production company based in Algiers. The company was founded in 2011 by actress Adila Bendimerad with the aim to discover and bring about the emergence of new Algerian talent.

Development

Feature Narrative
Spring Grants 2018

Latifa Said

Director / Screenwriter



Richard Djoudi

Producer



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Longer Will Be the Night

'Plus longue sera la nuit' / Algeria, France, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 90

Genre: Arthouse, Psychological Drama

Algeria decrees compensation for women raped during the “Black Decade”, a bloody and brutal civil war during the 1990s. Lacking a medical certificate as proof, Nora seeks witnesses in her search for justice.



Nora learns that the Algerian government is planning to compensate victims of rape from during the civil war. She travels to Algeria, but without a medical certificate, it is impossible for her to prove her case and gain justice. Instead, she must find witnesses to her rape, while making peace with her family and revealing to her son Réda the harrowing truth, that he was the result of a brutal assault.

Director's Note

In 2014, the Algerian government voted in the 14-26 decree, announcing that women violated by terrorists and members of armed groups during the 1990s could claim compensation. But this financial settlement cannot replace moral and legal compensation. Is it possible to forget? Is it possible for victims to fully live their daily lives without facing their past? Is forgiveness possible? Can we find ourselves again after losing so much? 'Longer Will Be the Night' tries to answer those questions. The drama takes place on a set steeped in history, the story of Algeria, marked by a conflict that lasted for ten years. How do Algerians live today, after experiencing such a war? How do they face their daily life? How do they remember what happened during those years? Nora's return to her native country with her son Réda will allow us to answer those questions.

Director's Biography

Photographer, **Latifa Said** made her first short documentary, 'Au revoir les Enfants' (Atelier FranceDoc) in 2011, and 'Douce France', in 2012. After winning the 1st Sirar Award in Aubagne with her screenplay, she directed the short film 'Jours Intranquilles' (2016), produced by Le Grec and awarded in several festivals. In 2017, she made a second short, 'Terrain Vague' shot in 35mm and presented in world premiere at the festival of Vila do Conde. Since then, the short film was selected in more than 50 festivals around the world, winning 12 prizes, including Best Film and Best Director.

Post-Production

Feature Narrative

Spring Grants 2018

Gan Bi

Director / Screenwriter



Zulong Shan, Charles Gillibert

Producers



Long Day's Journey into Night

'Di qiu zui hou de ye wan' / China, France, Taiwan, Qatar / Chinese / 2018

Runtime: 133

Genre: Drama, Arthouse, Film Noir

Past and present, realism and dream, all combine in a profoundly visual and highly innovative film noir ballet.



Luo Hongwu returns to Kaili, the hometown from which he fled several years ago. He begins the search for the woman he once loved, and whom he has never been able to forget. She said her name was Wan Qiwen but never revealed her true identity.

Director's Note

Whenever I start creating something, I think of myself coming from the moon to build architecture on Earth. As an alien, I wouldn't care about values, costs and locations at all. It has nothing to do with me. Instead, I would pay attention to materials, structures and styles because it would be very far away after coming back to the moon. I would only remember if it's in the forest or under the sea and those people living in it, their stories and emotions.

Director's Biography

Gan Bi is a Chinese new auteur, born in 1989. His critically acclaimed debut feature 'Kaili Blues' won the Best Emerging Director Award at the 68th Festival del film Locarno, the Montgolfière d'Or Award at the 37th Festival des 3 Continents, and the Best New Director Award at the 52nd Golden Horse Awards. It was also entered in numerous international film festivals and was sold to several territories. He has just completed his second feature film 'Long Day's Journey into Night', an international co-production between China and France.

Company Profile

Dangmai Films (Shanghai) was co-founded by director Bi Gan and his producer Shan Zuolong in July 2016. The two have been working together since their film 'Kaili Blues'. Invested in by one of China's biggest studios, Huace Group, Dangmai Films aims at producing high-quality art-house films with international co-production. 'Long Day's Journey into Night' will be its first production.

Contact

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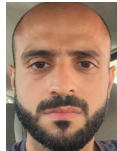
Development

Feature Narrative

Fall Grants 2018

Meqdad Al-Kout

Director / Screenwriter



Arnaud Dommerc

Producer



Mama, Where Are You?

'mama, way'nek' / Kuwait, France, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 100

Genre: Drama, Dark Comedy, Social Issues, Identity

Abbas is a 37-year-old single man who still lives with his parents in Kuwait. Passive, child-like and irresponsible, Abbas yearns to break free from his mother's care and control to live his own life.



Abbas is a 37-year-old bachelor who still lives with his parents in Kuwait. Passive, immature, and irresponsible, Abbas yearns to break free from his mother's care and control, to find himself by earning his independence. He leads a mundane life with no actual goals. The comfort of his parents' home and his high paying government job have turned him into a submissive child-like consumer. His routine begins to change when he meets new people, notably Nasser, who mentors him into adult life.

Contact

Andolfi Production

Arnaud Dommerc

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Director's Note

I feel like the story of Abbas is not just my story, but the story of my generation. We are never truly initiated into adult/independent life because of our society's rules and traditions, and so we remain comfortable in a child-like state of existence. Also, the wealth that came from the oil helped create a lethargic generation of people who realised they never have to do actual work, and thus remain spoiled and taken care of under the government and parents' eyes. Regarding the visual treatment of the film, I generally like to tell my stories with a subtle, fixed camera style. I'm very much influenced by the films of Ozu, Roy Anderson and others who use this style.

Director's Biography

Meqdad Al-Kout is a Kuwaiti filmmaker who graduated from Kuwait University in 2005 with a degree in English literature. He has directed multiple short films, mostly dealing with social satire and comedy. His short film 'Banana' won the special jury prize at the Gulf Film Festival 2009. He completed a masterclass with acclaimed Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami in 2011. In 2016, he completed an intensive filmmaking summer course at La Femis film school in Paris. He has his own YouTube mini-series titled 'World of Swalef' (2015-), mainly depicting slices of life.

Company Profile

Andolfi is an independent production company lead by Arnaud Dommerc. The company produces authors from every nationality, willing to explore new narrative and cinematographic aspects. Andolfi intends to claim a production eclecticism that allows their different projects to communicate and embrace the complete field of cinema; Live action, experimental, and documentary. 'Félicité' by Alain Gomis (Silver Bear Grand Jury Prize at Berlin Film Festival 2017) and the documentary 'The Graduation' by Claire Simon (Best documentary on cinema - Venice Classics Awards - Venice Film Festival 2016) are a few of the company's latest examples.

Production

Feature Narrative
Fall Grants 2018

Maha Haj

Director / Screenwriter



Baher Agbariya

Producer



Contact

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Mediterranean Fever

'Hum'a Al Mutawaset' / Palestine, France, Qatar, Germany / Arabic

Runtime: 80

Genre: Drama, Dark Comedy, Social Issues

An aspiring but depressed writer from Haifa befriends his new neighbour in an attempt to convince the man to help him commit suicide.



Waleed, a Palestinian man, lives comfortably in his sea-view home in Haifa with his wife and children. A former Hi-Tech engineer and aspiring writer, he knows the ins and outs of being a stay-at-home dad, but cannot seem to figure out what it takes to be happy. One day, Waleed is introduced to his new neighbour, who soon becomes the most critical person in his life. Jalal, a kind but pretentious small-time crook with a big heart, quickly develops a close relationship with Waleed who has a strange plan; his desperate hope to have Jalal kill him, while making it look like a natural death. Jalal is furious by his new friend's insane request and ends all contacts with him. On the other hand, Jalal continues to receive threats from the underworld to whom he owes money.

Director's Note

I am a filmmaker who has a melancholic state of mind with a sense of humour, which lead me to write the thriller-drama, 'Mediterranean Fever'. The film is about Waleed, a 40-year-old aspiring writer suffering from chronic depression. Through this fictional male character, I took my opinions and my daily thoughts to an extreme. Whether it's writer's block or my own confusion, this is the depression that I express within Waleed. I know Waleed's character, and I am familiar with it. I developed a mockery of my dark side through a person that is similar yet different than who I am. While playing with the theme of life and death, I took Waleed to extremes that I would never dare to reach.

Director's Biography

Born in Nazareth, **Maha Haj** is a graduate of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in English and Arabic literature. Her cinematic experience was derived from her work as an art director on films like 'The Time That Remain' (2009) by Elia Suleiman, and others. She wrote and directed the short film 'Oranges' (2009). In 2016, she released her first feature film 'Personal Affairs' which was widely acclaimed and selected to the Un Certain Regard official selection at Cannes Film Festival, and went on to win the Best Feature award at Haifa Film Festival 2016, the Critics award at Montpellier International Film Festival, and Best First Feature in Philadelphia.

Company Profile

Majdal Films was founded in 2012 by Baher Agbariya, with the aim to produce both fiction and documentary feature films. Notable and prizewinning features include Hany Abu- Assad's Academy Award-nominated film 'Omar' (2013) and 'The Idol' (2015); Maha Haj's 'Personal Affairs' (2016) (official selection at the Cannes Film Festival, Un Certain Regard); and Jessica Habie's 'Mars at Sunrise' (2014), amongst others.

Production

Feature Narrative

Spring Grants 2018

Kadija Leclere

Director / Co-screenwriter



Pierre-Olivier Mornas

Co-screenwriter



Contact

Kadija Leclere

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My Little One

'Ma Petite' / Morocco, Belgium, Qatar / Arabic, French

Runtime: 110

Genre: Drama, Social Issues, Immigration

Sarah, a Belgian woman of Moroccan descent, adopts a little girl in Morocco. But when the Belgian authorities deny her child's visa, it is the beginning of an arduous ordeal for both of them.



Sarah, a 35-year-old Belgian woman of Moroccan descent, longs to become a mother and start a family of her own. Following the advice of a specialist lawyer, Sarah decides to adopt a child from her country of origin: Morocco. On visiting an orphanage in Ouarzazate, she meets a two-month-old girl named Nae. The pair immediately forms a strong bond and Sarah adopts her. Their happiness is short-lived, however, as when she attempts to bring Nae with her to Belgium, the child is denied a visa. It is just the beginning of a distressing ordeal as Sarah fights to bring her daughter home.

Director's Note

'My Little One' tells of an encounter between a woman, Sarah, who dreams of having a child that nature refuses her, and a little girl, Nae, abandoned in an orphanage. Their two distinct needs come together and crystallize in a single powerful moment, as strong as childbirth and one that binds these two beings forever. Like in my previous short and feature films, I started from a very personal story to hopefully make it a universal story. The abandonment, the adoption, the mother-child bond, are still part of my questioning, even more so after my previous films 'Sarah' and 'A Bag of Flour'. This bond of unconditional attachment has something mysterious, inexplicable, inexhaustible. Whether the child is natural or adopted, this particular bond of filiation is built by a multitude of small, ordinary and day-to-day events. In 'My Little One', everything starts very well with this wonderful encounter. But the situation can change overnight when you set foot on the wrong path, and that's what happens to Sarah who starts her adoption process with false information.

Director's Biography

Kadija Leclere is an actress who graduated from the Royal Conservatory of Dramatic Arts in Brussels in 1997. She acted for several years before working as a casting director on over a hundred films. During this time, she also directed her first short film entitled 'Camille' (2001) serving as a springboard to 'Sarah' (2007), her second short, which was selected in many festivals. She directed her first feature film 'The Bag of Flour' in 2013, which was selected in more than 60 festivals. 'My Little One' is her second feature film.

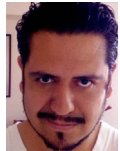
Post-Production

Feature Narrative

Fall Grants 2018

Joshua Gil

Director / Screenwriter



Marion D'Ornano, Laura Imperiale, Carlos Sosa

Producers



Contact

Parábola Cine

Marion D'Ornano

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Sanctorum

'Santuario' / Mexico, Qatar / Spanish / 2019

Runtime: 90

Genre: Drama, Fantasy, War, Social Issues

A child's spiritual and magical quest for his disappeared mother in a small town racked between the army and drug traffickers.



In a small town plagued by a war between the army and drug traffickers, a child has lost his mother. His grandmother has told him that the only way of getting her back is to invoke the forces of nature. The boy heads off into a forest to plead for his mother, while the town prepares for their final battle.

Director's Note

'Sanctorum' will bring to light a theme that fills the air in Mexico with hopelessness and despair—disappearances. I hope to achieve a visualization of trauma; an explanation of what it feels like to be exposed to extreme violence on a daily basis. In particular, the film will focus on the experience of losing a loved one and the psychosocial damage that can cause. Because the narrative arc follows an innocent and imaginative child, the film will have a dreamy quality to it, frequently invoking visual metaphor as the child navigates and tries to make sense of the savage world he lives in.

Director's Biography

Joshua Gil graduated with a master's degree in Cinematography from the School of Cinema and Audiovisuals of Catalonia (ESCAC) in Barcelona, Spain. He began his professional career in the photography department of the film 'Japan' (2002) by Carlos Reygadas. He subsequently developed as a director of photography in short films, feature films and documentaries while deepening his studies abroad with filmmakers such as Patricio Guzman and The Quay Brothers. In 2007, he began his career as a director of documentaries, publicity and television series. In 2015, he directed his first feature film 'La Maldad' selected at the 65th Berlin International Film Festival.

Company Profile

Parábola Cine was created in 2017 by filmmaker Joshua Gil, to produce his upcoming feature films. Currently in post-production, 'Sanctorum' is the first of them.

Production

Feature Narrative
Fall Grants 2018

Lotfi Achour

Director / Co-screenwriter



Natacha de Pontcharra

Co-screenwriter



Lotfi Achour, Anissa Daoud

Producers



Contact

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Severed Head

'Tête coupée' / Tunisia, France, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 90

Genre: Drama, Based on a True Story, Social Issues, Coming of Age

Two teenage shepherds are captured on a Tunisian mountainside by jihadists. Decapitating the eldest, the 14-year-old shepherd must return his cousin's head to the victim's mother.



Two young shepherds, Nizar (16), and his cousin Achraf (14) are grazing their goats on a meadow, high in a mountainous region in the Central West of Tunisia. This area has become a militarised zone, prohibited to civilians since it began serving as a hideout for Jihadist groups. Unaware of their misjudgment, the two shepherds are violently attacked and Achraf loses consciousness. When Achraf wakes up, he sees Nizar's body lying inanimately beside him, as one of the terrorists kicks a round mass towards him, telling him to bring it back to their family. Achraf discovers with horror, that it is his cousin's severed head. After some hesitation, full of pain and fear, Achraf finally places the severed head in his bag and carries his terrible burden down the mountain. He finds the courage to perform his abhorrent duty with Rahma's support, his 13-year-old cousin. The victim's family will try to recover the teenager's body at all costs, as they refuse to bury him without his body.

Director's Note

I decided to make this film starting from the question: "What can happen in the mind of a child when travelling ten kilometres with his cousin's head in his bag?". What can happen within him, as he is forced to retrace the path that resonated the same morning with the sound of their laughter, but now with this burden? The film will address how childhood, while being forever scarred by these events has also an almost magical power to transcend even the worst conditions of life. It is also the story of the third teenager of the film, Rahma, a 13-year-old girl, the only one capable of feeling what Achraf is going through. She will help him through the trials, motivated by the strong empathy and love she feels for him. A film deeply rooted in reality, raw and radical, 'Severed Head' is a reflection on violence as much as on childhood.

Director's Biography

A theatre and cinema director, **Lotfi Achour** directed more than twentyfive theatrical productions in London, Paris, Tunis, Avignon and beyond. His last play was produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company for the London Olympics and he was the author of an installation for the 2006 Nuit Blanche in Paris. In film, Achour directed four award-winning short films that screened from Clermont- Ferrand to Tokyo, including 'Father' in the Official Selection of the 2017 César Awards and 'Law of the Lamb', selected in the Official Competition at the 2016 Cannes Film Festival and the 2018 César Awards. 'Burning Hope' (2016) is his first feature film. Achour is currently working on a documentary project and his next fiction feature film, 'Severed Head'.

Company Profile

The Artistes Producteurs Associés (A.P.A.) have produced two documentaries, four short films, the feature film 'Burning Hope' (2016), and have partnered with Canal +, France 3, and Orange Studio. Two of their latest productions in short films 'Law of the Lamb' and 'All the Rest is the Work of Man' were respectively in official competition at Cannes Film Festival and the Mostra of Venice in 2016. Their films have participated in more than 200 festivals and have been awarded over fifty times. The company is co-managed by author, director and producer Lotfi Achour, and actress, author and producer Anissa Daoud.

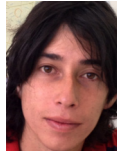
Post-Production

Feature Narrative

Fall Grants 2018

Carlos Piñeiro

Director / Producer



Diego Loayza

Co-screenwriter

Juan Pablo Piñeiro

Producer / Co-screenwriter



Contact

Socavón Cine

Juan Pablo Piñeiro

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Sirena

Bolivia, Qatar / Spanish / 2019

Runtime: 80

Genre: Drama, Social Issues, Identity

Four people arrive on an island in search of their friend who disappeared near Lake Titicaca, but the Aymara community that found his corpse refuses to return his body for superstitious reasons.



Lake Titicaca, 1984. Renowned La Paz engineer Morgan Cabrera drowns in a boating accident. An unfruitful search for his body comes to a halt when confirmation arrives from a faraway island. A task group sets off to retrieve the corpse: Engineer Peralta, his associate; Engineer Kunurana, assistant; officer Rilber Silva, a seasoned local policeman; Saturnino Poma, a bilingual community member who besides navigating the boat, will become the translator for two confronting worlds. The story begins with the group aboard a small boat and chronologically narrates the events of a single day, in the lives of the characters. When the engineers arrive, the community members, who speak only Aymara, refuse to return the corpse, because according to their sacred beliefs, doing so would ward off the possibility of a bountiful harvest. When the community members finally allow them to take the corpse, it never reaches its destination.

Director's Note

The challenge in directing this project was to translate the profound meaning of this story through my own aesthetical language. The Andean world, through its vast philosophy, reflects on many different aesthetical categories, each pregnant with its own extraordinary mythical and metaphorical content. To strengthen this aesthetical decision, we intersected these principles not only into the ethics of the content, but into the ethics of the production as well. We took our time to negotiate with the Aymara communities of the lake in order to get their permission to film on the islands. The production had to make a great effort because we spent weeks shooting in areas with no access to electricity. We wanted to capture the spirit of these landscapes in every scene, and we were also nurtured by the strong contradiction that surfaces between an isolated community and a film team.

Director's Biography

Carlos Piñeiro was born in the city of La Paz in 1986. He has directed a series of four short films, all awarded at different festivals: 'Martes de Challa' (2008); 'Max Jutam' (2010); 'Plato Paceño' (2013) and 'Amazonas' (2015). Piñeiro has also worked on over fifteen Bolivian and international feature films as a producer, assistant director, and art director. Piñeiro is currently in post-production on 'Sirena', his first feature film.

Company Profile

Socavón Cine is a filmmaking collective of young Bolivian filmmakers. They have produced over eleven short and feature films, selected in over 200 festivals around the world. Their latest feature film 'Dark Skull' (2016) directed by Kiro Russo, has become the most awarded film in the history of Bolivian cinema.

Post-Production

Feature Narrative

Spring Grants 2018

Svetla Tsotsorkova

Director / Co-screenwriter



Svetoslav Ovcharov

Co-screenwriter / Producer



Contact

Omega Films

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Sister

'Sestra' / Bulgaria, Qatar / Bulgarian / 2019

Runtime: 104

Genre: Women's Issues, Coming of Age, Drama, Identity

The lie of a teenage girl destroys the world of her elder sister. Struggling to regain her sister's trust, she finds out the truth about their mother.



In a small town in present-day Bulgaria, a mother and her two daughters are struggling to survive. The dreamy and distracted younger daughter often invents stories to make life more interesting. Unwittingly, she eventually gets caught in a web of her own lies and destroys her older sister's well-ordered materialistic world. While struggling to get to the facts, the two sisters find out the truth about their mother.

Director's Note

'Sister' is a tale about myself. I was seven years old when my grandma sent me out to buy bread. On the way, I ran into some other kids, and we spent the bread money on cotton candy. I went back home with a bag of chestnuts that a kid from the neighbourhood had given me. I said that the baker's wife was giving birth and he's closed the shop and that I bought chestnuts instead so we can have something for dinner. My grandmother raised me in a small village. Our life was boring, enclosed between the vineyard, the melon field, and caring for the donkey. How could one not start imagining a different life, when daily existence didn't offer anything? 'Sister' is a love confession to the people who live this kind of seemingly unnoticeable life. It seems to me that we all owe something to the truth about the world we live in. 'Sister' tells the story of how one girl becomes a woman, and how she learns that living with the truth doesn't make your life easier but certainly makes it brighter.

Director's Biography

Svetla Tsotsorkova was born in Burgas in 1977, and graduated from the National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts in Sofia in 2004. Her first short film 'Life with Sophia' was screened at various international film festivals; Semaine de la Critique, Karlovy Vary, and Telluride, winning multiple awards including Trieste, and Lodz. Her first feature 'Thirst' had its world premiere at San Sebastian FF - New Directors competition in 2015. The film participated in more than 60 festivals around the world, received various awards and was sold in 15 countries.

Company Profile

Omega Films was established in 2006, and since then the company has produced four features, four documentaries and one animation film. Their work has participated in various distinguished platforms such as the San Sebastian, Cairo, Pusan, Warsaw, Moscow, Thessaloniki, Sao Paolo, Haifa, and Rotterdam film festivals. Omega Films, together with Front Film, co-produced Svetla Tsotsorkova's first feature 'Thirst' (2015), which was sold in 15 countries and participated in over 60 international festivals. Between 2006 and 2016 the company also ran a private TV kitchen channel called Fiesta TV.

Production

Feature Narrative

Spring Grants 2018

Ala Eddine Slim

Director / Screenwriter / Producer



Juliette Lepoutre,

Pierre Menahem

Producers



Tlameess

Tunisia, France, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 120

Genre: Drama

The story of “S”, a young Tunisian soldier who deserts the army, and his meeting with “F”, a pregnant woman.



Following the death of his mother, “S”, a young Tunisian soldier, returns home. He deserts the army and is sought by the authorities. After several altercations with the police, “S” is seriously injured, and takes refuge in a nearby forest. “F”, a young pregnant woman, lives in a luxurious villa in the same forest. There she meets the strange “S”, who is undergoing some unusual changes of his own.

Director's Note

The film ‘Tlameess’ is a continuation of my previous works, exploring a new path to what was dear to me from the beginning: how to blur the visual and sonic landscape within my works. The film is split into two main components; the first part focuses on “realistic” nature and the second concerns the “surrealistic” world. Both parts work as a mirror effect, and several connections are made throughout, apart from the presence of the main character who transcends this duality.

Director's Biography

Ala Eddine Slim is a Tunisian filmmaker. He graduated from Tunisia’s Higher Institute of Multimedia Arts of Manouba. His end-of-studies project, entitled ‘The Night of the Dreamers’ won an award at the National Amateur Film Festival of Kélibia in 2004. In 2005, Slim co-founded Exit Productions, which produced his first professional short film, ‘The Fall’ (2007). The film was selected for several international festivals and was broadcast on two European television channels. In 2008, as part of a summer internship at La Fémis, he directed the short documentary ‘One Night Among the Others’. ‘Tlameess’ is his most recent film, and a Franco-Tunisian co-production.

Company Profile

Created in 2005, Exit Productions has produced almost 20 films. The company is well known for producing the work of the young, independent generation of Tunisian filmmakers, and for its innovative approach to filmmaking methods. Exit’s films have been screened in more than 100 festivals worldwide, among them the prestigious Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival and FIDMarseille; have won 11 awards, including the best prize in the history of Tunisian documentary filmmaking for ‘Babylon’ (2012) from FIDMarseille; and have been programmed by contemporary art centres including the Museum of Modern Art and the Centre Pompidou. In addition to its films, Exit has produced corporate films, advertising spots, and media coverage productions. The company has also worked with many Tunisian and international NGOs.

Contact

Exit Productions

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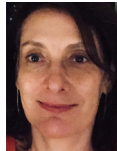
Post-Production

Feature Narrative

Spring Grants 2018

Flavia Castro

Director / Screenwriter / Producer



Gisela Camara, Walter Salles

Producers



Contact

Tacacá Filmes

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Unremember

'Deselembro' / Brazil, France, Qatar / French, Portuguese, Spanish / 2018

Runtime: 100

Genre: Coming of Age, Drama, Politics, Family, Identity, Exile

After a childhood spent in France, 14-year-old Joana returns to Brazil with her family. As she struggles to adapt to her new reality, fragments of her past resurface.



Joana is a 15-year-old who feeds her soul with literature and rock. She lives in Paris with her two brothers, mother and stepfather, who were forced into political exile. Her father “disappeared” when Joana was six, suspected to have been killed when imprisoned by the military dictatorship. In 1979 amnesty is granted in Brazil. Overnight and against Joana’s will, her family move back to Rio de Janeiro. In the city of her birth, and where her father disappeared, Joana begins to recover pieces from her fragmented childhood. Different countries and languages blend in violent or nebulous situations. Experiencing sensations from a history shaped by the political choices of her parents and her father’s death, Joana attempts to write her own story in the present tense.

Director's Note

Even though in some circles the return of the exiled was celebrated, nobody ever looked at the children. How do we shape our personality with the constant sensation of a fractured childhood, like pieces from a puzzle that never match? When I was putting together my first film, the documentary 'Diary, Letters, Revolutions', in which I tell the story of my childhood and my Trotskyist activist father, moving from country to country, fleeing each dictatorship as they gripped Latin America, I felt the need to delve deeper into this issue. So fiction took over, and I started writing. I want to discuss the melancholy of teenage years. I want to talk about a girl's passion for books, about being shy, about first loves, about fighting with her parents, the ordinary issues of any fifteen-year-old girl.

Director's Biography

Flavia Castro is a director and scriptwriter with an MA in Cinema from Université Sorbonne, France. She has worked extensively as a scriptwriter and assistant director for films and television documentaries in France and Brazil. 'Diario de Uma Busca' (Diary, Letters, Revolutions) is her first documentary feature film. It has received various international awards and was released in Brazil and France. In 2015, she wrote and directed the episode 'Mathematics' as part of the feature 'El Aula Vacía', produced by Gael Garcia Bernal and screened at South by Southwest, BAFICI, Malaga, Guadalajara and Punta del Este.

Company Profile

Tacacá Filmes is a Brazilian independent production company based in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. We develop and produce feature films and TV projects with various directors. We enjoy and are used to working in partnership with other companies, both in Brazil and abroad.

Development

Feature Narrative

Fall Grants 2018

Ramzi Maqdisi

Director / Screenwriter



Iyas Jubeh

Producer



Contact

Quds Art Films

Iyas Jubeh

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Where Did I Leave My Face?

'ayn tarakt wajahi?' / Palestine, France, Germany, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 85

Genre: Drama, Exile, Social Issues

A man from Jerusalem decides to leave everything behind and start his life again in Paris, but his past soon catches up with him.



Ali, originally from Jerusalem, lives in Paris with his girlfriend, Julie. He is constantly travelling between the two cities to regularly renew his Israeli ID card and avoid losing his citizenship, and becoming stateless. Back home, the city council is threatening to demolish his family's house, who are exhausted from the pressure. In Paris, Julie discovers she is sick and on his way back to her, a thief steals Ali's ID card. Recent attacks have created a tense atmosphere in Paris, and a tension surfaces at Julie's home too when Julie's recent illness has intensified her wish to have children, a desire Ali does not share. They decide to end their relationship, and Ali returns to Jerusalem to renew his ID, where his family house in soon thereafter demolished. Once again, Ali has to leave Palestine to find a new home.

Director's Note

This film is about living both as a bystander and always being on standby; never knowing what you are waiting for or when it will come. Since I was a child, I felt a huge loneliness inside me, and I kept this feeling to myself. The film is a conversation with myself, it explores this lingering feeling of loneliness and nostalgia that I am seeing is only growing as I get older. This feeling comes from an internal conflict; between a desire to build a place that feels like home with the knowledge that one's history is based upon destruction and displacement. I want to ask whether belonging is something that we can construct? And whether we all, regardless of our background, have within us a nostalgia to return to a state of belonging, but we do not have the tools to find the way back.

Director's Biography

Ramzi Maqdisi was born 1980 in Jerusalem, Palestine and studied Performing Arts. He began his professional career as an actor in 'Palestinian N.T.' (2000-2005) and other theatre plays. He directed a play in Spain and in 2005, he continued his studies at Catalonia Film, where he directed the films 'Solomon's Stone' (audience award at Mizna Film Festival 2015) and 'Defying My Disability' (2016).

Company Profile

Founded in 2013 by Iyas Jubeh, Ramzi Maqdisi, Aurelien Lambert and Juan Meseguer, Quds Art Films is a collective of artists from Europe and the Middle East covering multiple disciplines including film, theatre and music. Their aim is to transcend boundaries and see beyond walls; to narrate stories of, and from people and places. Their goals are to bring together artists from different backgrounds in a more permanent way, through collaboration projects, and to provide a solid start and development to all of its creations.

Post-Production

Feature Narrative

Spring Grants 2018

Ivan Salatić

Director / Screenwriter



Dušan Kasalica

Producer



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Meander Film

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You Have the Night

'Mornarica' / Montenegro, Serbia, Qatar / English, Italian, Serbo-Croatian / 2018

Runtime: 83

Genre: Drama, Social Issues, Family, Identity

Following her stay aboard a cruise, Sanja returns home. In an attempt to understand the people around her, she embarks on yet another journey.



After losing her job as a hostess aboard a ship, Sanja finds herself stranded, with nowhere to go but home. Returning to her small coastal hometown in Montenegro, she discovers the shipyard has filed for bankruptcy, leaving many people out of work. Boats covered with tarpaulin are scattered around the forgotten landscape, set aside for better days. A storm comes, and one life is lost, while Luka waits for the night in the woods, a night in which everything could change.

Director's Note

This film focuses on one specific micro-space in the backyards of today's Europe. It deals with people on the margins of society and problems in their immediate space, dramatically changed by the political and economic transition, which now appears to be a permanent state of uncertainty and poverty reserved for this part of Europe. I intend to make a film about the perplexity of young people who are drifting between promises of a better life and their inability to take control over it, in a country where corruption and decay have taken over all segments of life. This film will also show the inability of the older generation who didn't do well after the demolition of socialism in Yugoslavia. The transition to capitalism does not actually represent the change from one society to another (better) form, but rather the silent murder of those who cannot adapt.

Director's Biography

Ivan Salatić was born in Dubrovnik in 1982 and grew up in Herceg Novi. After finishing art school in Belgrade, he started getting involved in film. He graduated from the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Cetinje. With his short films, in which he combines documentary and fiction, he participated in many international festivals, most importantly in the Venice Festival 2015 with his short film 'Backyards'. He has completed the Master Film Studies at the HFBK in Hamburg and is currently working on the finalisation of one fiction and one documentary feature.

Company Profile

Meander Film is a new Montenegrin film production company based in Nikšić. Its founders are two young Montenegrin film directors - Dušan Kasalica and Ivan Salatić. Guided by the idea of developing modern trends in the field of art film in Montenegro, and encouraged by the fact that recently in Montenegro there is a wave of young, creative and courageous authors who are keeping up with a modern understanding of film, Kasalica and Salatić established Meander Film. This way they begin a new adventure with the desire of bringing together young professionals that walk hand-in-hand towards the same goals.

Feature Documentary

143 Sahara Street
Amussu
The Cave
Children of the Famine
The Devil's Drivers
Facing the Dragon
Femmetasia
The Forbidden Strings
Freedom Fields
Froth
Gevar's Land
Heights
Loving Wallada
The Marriage Project
Midnight Traveler
Places Of The Soul
Plastic Flowers
Speak So I Can See You
Talking About Trees
We Are Inside
You Don't Die Two Times

Feature Experimental or Essay

The Dam
The Earth Doesn't Move
It's Far Away Where I Must Go
Mother, I Am Suffocating. This Is My Last Film About You
What We Left Unfinished

Development

Feature Documentary
Spring Grants 2018

Hassen Ferhani

Director



Narimane Mari

Producer



143 Sahara Street

Algeria, France, Qatar / Arabic / 2019

Runtime: 70

Genre: Creative Documentary

Malika lives alone in the middle of the Sahara desert. She runs a restaurant, a stopover for many truckers and occasional tourists on the Trans-Sahara highway, crossing from Algeria to Mali.



Malika lives alone in the middle of the desert. There she runs a small restaurant serving two dishes, omelette or tomato omelette, to those who pass through like fleeting apparitions. This place, while seemingly absent from the outside world, tells of a country and in its soul. The winds of sand and silence say just as much as the dramas and dreams of those who stop there for a cigarette, a tea, to talk, or to be silent. Malika seems to have gathered these countless stories along the way, and they are now as much a part of her as she is of them.

Contact

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Director's Note

Through meeting Malika, I finally found the idea for my road movie. Firstly, a road movie is about roads, and in this film, we centre on the Trans-Sahara Highway. A road movie is about characters, here we meet Malika and a multitude of passing truck drivers. A road movie is also about stories, Malika's story and the stories that the road evokes. Finally, a road movie is about movement, here - travellers come and go through Malika's daily life. I want to stay at Malika's for quite a while, spend time with her, stay with her, her dog, and the blind cat. I do not necessarily want to know what brought her to this no man's land, nor how she's lost the north. I'm trying to discover what she sees from her neck of the woods.

Director's Biography

Hassen Ferhani was born in Algeria in 1986. In 2006, he directed his first short film, 'Les Baies d'Alger', which was screened in official competition in numerous international festivals. In 2008, he participated in a workshop at La Fémis, where he directed the short film 'Le Vol du 140'. Since 2009, Ferhani has worked as an assistant director. In 2010, he co-directed the documentary 'Afric-Hotel', which screened at Visions du Réel and FIDMarseille. 'Roundabout in My Head' (2015) was his first feature-length film and has been awarded several major international prizes including FID, IDFA, Torino, Amiens, Carthage, Algiers, Entrevues Belfort, Festival Filmer le Travail de Poitiers, and Vues d'Afrique.

Company Profile

Allers Retours Films is committed to producing engaging and creative cinema. It selects and works with the projects of artists who involve themselves in contemporary history through film and the visual arts.

Post-Production

Feature Documentary

Fall Grants 2018

Nadir Bouhmouch

Director / Producer



Amussu

Morocco, Qatar / Tamazight / 2019

Runtime: 90

Genre: Creative Documentary, Social Issues, Identity

A rapacious silver mine in Morocco has syphoned aquifer water for decades, drying out the almond groves belonging to a small Amazigh community. Armed with poems and songs, the villagers occupy the water pipeline for seven years in an effort to save their fragile oasis.



Imider, southeastern Morocco. A rapacious silver mine has syphoned aquifer water for decades, drying out the almond groves belonging to a small Amazigh community. Fearing their fragile oasis might disappear and their livelihoods destroyed, the villagers peacefully rebelled in 2011 and shut down a major water pipeline heading towards the mine. Seven years later, they continue to occupy it, in a protest camp which has now practically turned into a small solar-powered village. However, backed by conniving intelligence services and aggressively protected by the police, Africa's biggest silver mine is no easy adversary. Dozens have been arrested for taking part in what the villagers have called "Amussu of Ubrid n '96" (Movement on Road '96). Nonetheless, the resilient villagers continue to resist with the little means they have—songs, dry bread, weekly protests, a flimsy camera, a film festival and endless ingenuity.

Contact

Nadir Bouhmouch

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Director's Note

I visited Imider for the first time in early 2015. There, I encountered extraordinary villagers who were weaving carpets, singing and reciting poetry—all while resiliently living in a protest camp on a windy mountain. I quickly became enamoured with this rebellious community and since then, have not ceased to visit. By the end of 2016, we decided to embark on this project together in a mode of film production founded on the community's direct participation. As such, our collective work is creatively grounded in local poetics which aspire to a global appeal. As one Amazigh proverb goes: "Tar Izli, Urtamu"—an event without its poem, is an event which never happened. This film is that poem.

Director's Biography

Nadir Bouhmouch is a 27-year-old filmmaker and producer based in Marrakech. In 2011, Nadir directed his first work, 'My Makhzen & Me', a web documentary about Morocco's February 20th uprising. Nadir's other works include 'Timnadin N Rif' (2017), a short documentary, and 'Paradises of the Earth' (2017-), a web series on the environmental causes of the Tunisian revolution. In addition to his work in film, Nadir is also a researcher, photographer and writer focusing on indigenous land rights and environmental issues in Morocco's marginalised interior regions. Some of his work has been published by Al Jazeera, Middle East Eye and Le Monde.

Company Profile

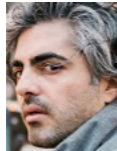
Founded in the small village of Imider in southeastern Morocco, the Movement on Road '96 and the Local Film Committee of Imider (MOR-LFCI), is an autonomous film collective composed of volunteer artists, peasants, workers, shepherds, unemployed youth and film technicians. The collective is governed by "Agraw," the village's general assembly, as its highest ranking decision-making body. While the MOR was founded as a grassroots socioenvironmental movement in August 2011, the LFCI was created in October 2016 as its audiovisual arm. As such, the MOR-LFCI aims to promote cultural production and innovation in that marginalised region of Morocco, to preserve local culture and popular memory, to defend the small oasis of Imider from environmental degradation, and to encourage social change. The collective has also organised two film festivals and dozens of individual film screenings inside and outside the Commune of Imider, in addition to coordinating more than a dozen audiovisual workshops for children, unemployed youth and women since the LFCI's founding. So far, the MOR-LFCI's work has received the attention and support of cultural actors globally, from small grassroots screenings in marginalised villages across the Maghreb, to the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture, to the Biennale in Venice.

Development

Feature Documentary
Spring Grants 2018

Feras Fayyad

Director



Kristine Barfod

Producer



Contact

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The Cave

'Alkahf' / Syria, Denmark, USA, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 90

Genre: Women, War, Creative Documentary, Equality, Politics

A group of female doctors establish a subterranean hospital in order to save the lives of victims of chemical and conventional weapons during the Syrian civil war.



To escape the ongoing aerial bombardment on hospitals and chemical weapon attacks that killed many victims, some of the medical staff in Syria were forced to establish hidden subterranean hospitals in order to save the lives of their patients and avoid losses in medical staff and equipment. Alghouta in Damascus was the grounds of several such attacks with chemical weapons, with the staff there establishing a subterranean refuge, named "The Cave". Dr Amani was elected as the managing director of the hospital where she works with her colleagues, Dr Alaa and nurse Samaher, as well as 18 other women from a staff of 80 people. They all face death daily as they try to save the lives of the people of their town and to isolate and fortify the hospital against further attack.

Director's Note

While I was filming 'Last Men in Aleppo', I was able to visit several subterranean hospitals located underground used for protecting civilians from chemical attack, as well as from the brutal conflict. Here, we experience how women play a substantial role to make a difference. I decided to follow three women Amani, Alaa and Samaher. Through their eyes, I discover the different layers of the human conflict they face every day in the deadly war. The hospital became the only hope for people to survive and receive treatment, as well as a space for these women to discover their own role and identity, and fight for their rights. I try through the structure and style of the storytelling to show the underground hospital as the womb or a matrix, where it reflects the personality of the strong female characters. While observing their stories, we are forced to view our own moral role in the conflict.

Director's Biography

Feras Fayyad is an Oscar-nominated director, who won an Emmy for Outstanding Current Affairs Documentary for 'Last Men in Aleppo' (2017). Fayyad was born in Syria in 1984 and holds a BA in Audio-visual Arts and Filmmaking from the international film and television school EICAR in Paris. He has directed and edited several films, both documentaries and fiction, and has received particular recognition for his work on contemporary Syrian issues and the political transformation of the Arab world. 'Last Men in Aleppo' (2017) won the international documentary competition at Sundance Film Festival along with more than 50 other international awards.

Company Profile

Danish Documentary Production was founded in 2007 by four award-winning directors and their producer. Today the company is run by director Pernille Rose Grønkjær: 'The Monastery - Mr. Vig and the Nun' (IDFA winner), 'Love Addict', 'Genetic Me', by director Eva Mulvad: 'A Modern Man' (CPH:-DOX competition 2017), 'The Good Life' (winner of Karlovy Vary, and Doc Alliance award), 'Enemies of Happiness' (Sundance & IDFA winner), by director 'Mikala Krogh: A Normal Life' (CPH: DOX Audience Award), 'Cairo Garbage', 'Everything is Relative', 'The Newsroom- Off the Record', and by producer Sigrid Jonsson Dyekjær, PGA: Ai Wei Wei - 'The Fake Case', 'Something Better to Come', 'Free The Mind', 'Bugs', 'Amateurs in Space' and co-producer on Ulrich Seidl's 'Safari'.

Production

Feature Documentary
Spring Grants 2018

Reine Mitri

Director / Producer



Children of the Famine

'Abna' al majaa' / Lebanon, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 100

Genre: Creative Documentary, Politics, History

Between 1915 and 1918, an estimated 200,000 people died from hunger in Mount Lebanon. For them, there is no memorial. Few photos remain, and ruins emerge from oblivion.



Between 1915 and 1918, a famine killed an estimated two hundred thousand people, almost half of the population of Mount Lebanon at that time, a region that formed the "Moutasarrifiya" and had a special status in the Ottoman Empire. During the tragedy, villages were entirely emptied; today only ruins remain there. The hungry who fled to cities like Beirut and Tripoli that were outside Mount Lebanon begged and moaned for food while watching the luxurious meals from the windows of wealthy monopolists. The dead were buried in unmarked mass graves all over the territory, and some were even thrown into the sea. Despite the extent of the disaster, today there is no memorial or national day for these dead. Why has the memory of this famine been excluded from official history?

Contact

Les films de l'absence
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Director's Note

Before the hundredth commemoration of the famine in 2015, I was like the majority of my Lebanese generation, and younger, almost ignorant on this subject. The famine was a vague and distant event disconnected from our daily lives, as if there had been a rupture between this distant past, to recent history and present day. In fact, I realized that there is indeed a rupture and this is due to the fact that this history has been suppressed from the official and popular historical narratives in Lebanon. From here, I started searching for the causes of this suppression and when I saw the photos I was traumatized. This shock mixed with incomprehension pushed me to want to know more and understand. Once again, I find myself in the past searching for a memory, and in this memory, I am trying to understand the malaise of the country and our malaise as its people.

Director's Biography

Reine Mitri is a writer, director and producer. The primary theme of her films is personal and collective memory. Always interweaving the intimate and the public, she delves into the reasons for personal and collective malaise. Over the past 15 years, she documented the changes in Beirut in particular and Lebanon in general, challenging the official endeavours to obliterate the country's memory. Since 2001, she has made six films including 'In This Land Lay Graves of Mine' (2014) which documents forced displacements during the Lebanese civil war and the country's present-day divisions.

Company Profile

After 15 years of producing her own films, individually or within production companies, filmmaker Reine Mitri established her production company, Les films de l'absence. Adopting a nonconformist approach to cinema, the company produces politically, socially and aesthetically "disobedient" films, which are uncompromising and void of self-complacency.

Post-Production

Feature Documentary

Spring Grants 2018

Mohammed Abugeth

Co-director / Screenwriter



Daniel Carsenty

Co-director / Producer



Contact

Daniel Carsenty
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The Devil's Drivers

Palestine, Germany, Qatar / Arabic / 2019

Runtime: 90

Genre: Documentary, Social Issues

Chased by the Israeli army, two Bedouin cousins smuggle Palestinian migrant workers through the Negev desert in an intimate portrait of men living on the edge.



The southern West Bank with its beautiful landscapes is home to many Palestinian Bedouins. In their midst, Israelis have built highly fortified settlements cutting them from their lands, leaving them with no other possibility but to work as migrant workers in Israel. In 2012, we started filming two Bedouin cousins smuggling workers with their jeeps into Israel - young gangsters, modern-day versions of Robin Hood. Years later the situation has become so difficult that one decided to quit. He opened his own construction business, but one night in 2016, he got a phone call asking him to cross the border once more. The very next day he was arrested by special forces under suspicion of aiding an ISIS-attack. The documentary spans an arch from the easy-going days of 2012 to the unbearable hardships during the Third Intifada, portraying two cousins in their struggle for independence in a world getting more dangerous day-by-day.

Director's Note

In today's West Bank, with its political stalemate and the absence of any imaginable future without an eight-meter high wall, we have the impression that perpetual imprisonment has become the Palestinian destiny. The smugglers portrayed in our film appear as modern-day versions of Prometheus, who rebels against the powerful and is punished by having to relieve the same full day over and over again until eternity. The smugglers struggle with their own means against a world of injustice that surrounds them, by putting themselves in danger every day and returning in the evenings to their families only to spend their hard-earned money for groceries and car repairs. They are genius drivers, and if they had been born in Europe or America they would have without a doubt become champion stock car drivers, but in their world, these options don't exist.

Directors' Biography

Daniel Carsenty was born in 1982 in Frankfurt. He graduated in 2014 from the Film University 'Konrad Wolf' in Potsdam with his first feature film, 'After Spring Comes Fall'. The film had its premiere in 2015 at the Hofer Filmfestspiele in Germany and was screened internationally at GIFF Göteborg and the Mostra in Sao Paulo. It was awarded Best Feature at the Vilmos Szizmond Festival in Hungary, Best Production at the Achtung Berlin Festival and won the Michael Ballhaus-Award for Best Cinematography at the First Steps Award. 'The Devil's Drivers' is his second feature film.

Mohammed Abugeth was born in Jerusalem in 1986. He studied computer sciences at the Al-Quds University in Jerusalem and worked as a production assistant for Idioms Films in Ramallah. In 2013, he moved to Germany to study International Media Management at the Academy of the 'Deutsche Welle', the German foreign channel, in Bonn and graduated in 2015 with a Masters of Fine Arts. Since then he has worked in Berlin as a TV freelancer. 'The Devil's Drivers' is his first feature-length film.

Post-Production

Feature Documentary
Spring Grants 2018

Sedika Mojadidi

Director



Jenny Raskin

Producer



Facing the Dragon

Afghanistan, USA, Qatar / Dari / 2018

Runtime: 80

Genre: Documentary, Politics, Women Issues

A story following two unconventional Afghan women, one a member of parliament and the other a journalist, as the international community withdraws from their country's fragile democracy.



In a documentary filmed over four years, filmmaker Sedika Mojadidi intimately follows two unconventional Afghan women, Nilofar, a member of parliament and Shakila, a television journalist. As American forces and aid leave Afghanistan, the country's fragile democracy and the recent gains for women hang in the balance, forcing Nilofar and Shakila to choose between their children and their country amidst threats to both their lives and families.

Contact

Sedika Mojadidi
Mojo Mama Films
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Director's Note

I fell into documentary filmmaking because real life is always more interesting to me than fiction and the camera gave me the courage to go out into the world. I love to be invisible behind my camera. As a teenager in Florida, I longed to live in Kabul. Once I began travelling back, I realized I was too American to live there permanently. But, I thought if I could get close to women who reminded me of the women I'd grown up with then maybe I could be close to a country I'd lost. This film is kind of a bittersweet love letter. Many stereotypes still exist today about Afghans. I hope my film creates a relationship with Afghans as people first, who like everyone else are trying to keep their humanity in extraordinarily difficult situations. It's still a radical notion.

Director's Biography

Sedika Mojadidi is an independent filmmaker and producer. She was born in Kabul, Afghanistan, and grew up in the United States. She holds an MA in Film Theory from the University of Florida and an MFA in Video from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Sedika directed and produced the feature documentary 'Motherland Afghanistan', which follows her father's struggle to make a difference in the maternal mortality epidemic gripping Afghanistan. It aired nationally on Independent Lens and the Global Voices Documentary Series. The United Nations Population Fund selected 'Motherland Afghanistan' for screenings across the country, and the film has screened at numerous festivals around the world. Sedika has also worked as a producer and camerawoman for ABC News, A&E, Discovery, TLC, Guardian Multi-Media and Human Rights Watch.

Company Profile

Mojo Mama Films, LLC, is a limited liability company owned by Sedika Mojadidi and located in Brooklyn, New York, that produces independent documentaries for broadcast and for multi-media internet platforms. The company has produced content for the Guardian and PBS.

Development

Feature Documentary
Fall Grants 2018

Mouhssine El Badaoui

Director



Karim Aitouna, Isabel De la Serna

Producers



Contact

Waq Waq Studio
Karim Aitouna
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Femmetasia

Morocco, Belgium, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 90

Genre: Creative Documentary, Social Issues, Identity

Hanane, a young woman from a modest village in Marrakech decides to enter the traditionally male-only festival of battle bravery, Fantasia. Assembling her own troupe of horsewomen, she must face the prejudices of a patriarchal society.



Coming from a humble village, Hanane is determined to make a name for herself as the founder and member of the only female troupe of horsewomen representing Marrakech. But the challenges are daunting, as Fantasia, a Moroccan festivity of battle bravery, is a costly and traditionally male-only activity. Hanane is ready to run every gauntlet though, and she's willing to sacrifice her private life, threaten her family's financial situation, and face the prejudices of a patriarchal society. Her ambition is to achieve a good show at her district's prestigious yearly Moussem, opposite the best riders in the kingdom. This is about more than mere recognition—her status as a woman and her social position are at stake.

Director's Note

Hanane has a dream—to become the symbol of women's Fantasia in Morocco. In a discipline that has been dominated by men for centuries, in a society feeling for balance between tradition and modernity. I see Hanane as a being who, despite severe hardships, fights to survive and make her dreams come true. She gave up her studies and her private life to dedicate herself to the forming of her troupe of female riders. She believes in what she does. She doesn't let obstacles standing in her way serve as excuses to give up the fight. On the contrary, Hanane fights harder. She bargains, she comes up with solutions. Her persistence earns her the trust of her entourage. She makes them believe in her dream too. Hanane's story reflects my own, the story of a human being committed to their own freedom, who refuses to follow a destiny dictated by others.

Director's Biography

Mouhssine El Badaoui was born in Casablanca to a family of performers. He first worked as a technician in the El Badaoui theatre company, then as an actor and stage director. He took part in several tours in the kingdom and has directed several radio programmes, TV shows and theatre plays. He went on to study movie directing in the Institut des Arts de Diffusion in Belgium, where he graduated with honours in 2002. Mouhssine has worked as an assistant location manager on Belgian TV series, then as first assistant director on foreign films shot in Southern Morocco such as 'Babel' (Alejandro Iñárritu, 2006), '13 Hours' (Michael Bay, 2016), and 'Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk' (Ang Lee, 2016). He joined RTBF in 2007 where he directs several live multi-camera TV shows such as 'Au quotidien', 'Mise au point', '69 minutes sans chichis', and 'On n'est pas des pigeons'.

Company Profile

Waq Waq is a film studio and a production company based in Tangier, Morocco. Our last productions are 'Contro Figura' by Rà Di Martino, selected at the Venice International Film Festival 2017 and 'Renault 12' (2018) by Mohamed Al Khatib, selected at the Marrakech and Premiers Plans Angers international film festivals.

Post-Production

Feature Documentary

Fall Grants 2018

Hasan Noori

Director



Afsaneh Salari

Producer



Contact

Docmaniacs

Afsaneh Salari

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The Forbidden Strings

Afghanistan, Iran, Qatar / Persian / 2019

Runtime: 75

Genre: Creative Documentary, Social Issues, Youth, Music

Born and raised in Iran, four Afghan musicians risk a dangerous journey from Iran to Afghanistan to make a dream come true— their first rock concert in their war-torn motherland.



During the day, they are labourers and do what most Afghan refugees do in Iran, which is carpentry and tailoring. But as night falls, they change clothes and transform to what they dream to be—rock stars. Hakim, Akbar, Mohammad and Soraya are among the second generation of three million Afghan refugees living in Iran since 1980s. Regardless of their refugee status and its limitations, they dared to dream and managed to form their rock band five years ago. Their dream was clear: their first rock concert should be in the motherland they have never seen, Afghanistan. The film follows the journey of the Arikain band from Iran to Afghanistan despite all odds. They have various obstacles to overcome, from traditional families who are vehemently against music, lack of financial means, to security issues inside Afghanistan. The road between Kabul to Bamyan festival is one of the most dangerous roads in Afghanistan, under the full control of the Taliban. The film follows the Arikain shoulder to shoulder, from the days they dream of a journey to their war-torn motherland, to the hectic and dangerous roads taking them to the music festival.

Director's Note

I've learnt to divide my people into two groups—those who follow their dreams and those who bury them. As an Afghan immigrant, if you are among the first group, it means you believe in miracles. 'The Forbidden Strings' aspires to send an important message to the whole refugee community and not only Afghans. As refugees, we are allowed to dream and fight for it. That's how we change and our societies back home change. A country never changes for the better when arms, tanks and soldiers are involved but it does change gradually through art and culture. And after decades of war, terrorism and foreign intervention, my war-torn Afghanistan needs the presence of art more than ever.

Director's Biography

Hasan Noori was born in Iran to Afghan parents. He studied sociology and worked as a social assistant for NGOs fighting child labour in Iran and mainly with Afghan refugee children. He primarily makes video clips and films that raise awareness for the Afghan community in Iran. Hasan has a master's degree in Cinema from Tehran University. 'The Forbidden Strings' is Hasan's first documentary feature. Hasan is also an alumnus of IDFA Summer School 2017 and Karlovy Vary Docs in progress 2018. He is currently working on his next documentary film, 'The Songs of My Land', which is now in development.

Company Profile

Docmaniacs collective was born out of the collaboration of three young Iranian documentary artists, Afsaneh Salari, Sepand Saedi and Hoda Siahtiri. Afsaneh and Hoda met in Europe during their master studies in Docnomads, documentary directing, and their similar worldview inspired them to work with each other after their education, alongside Sepand, Hoda's old friend and colleague. The collective aims to produce documentaries and are eager to accompany other regional filmmakers into the international circuit, while keeping an independent artistic and social voice. The collective is currently producing the documentaries 'The Silhouettes' by Afsaneh Salari, funded by Sundance Institute and Asian Cinema Fund, and 'The Forbidden Strings' partially funded by IDFA Bertha Fund and Doha Film Institute.

Post-Production

Feature Documentary
Spring Grants 2018

Naziha Arebi

Director / Producer



Flore Cosquer

Producer



Contact

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Freedom Fields

'Maleab Alhuriya' / Libya, UK, Netherlands, USA, Qatar, Lebanon, Canada / Arabic, English / 2018

Runtime: 97

Genre: Documentary, Sports

At the new dawn of a nation once cut off from the world, a dynamic group of women from fractured sides of the revolution come together to play football.



At the new dawn of a nation once cut off from the world, a dynamic group of women from fractured sides of the revolution come together to play football. A Doha Film Institute granted film, 'Freedom Fields' is a story about hope and sacrifice in a land where dreams seem a luxury. Filmed over five years, it follows three brave women and their efforts to build a team in post-revolution Libya, as the country descends into civil war. The challenges they must overcome to achieve their dream of playing for their country are nothing short of remarkable. Throughout, they struggle to gain support, respect, and even the right to play, as certain segments of the community don't approve of their ambitions. Through the eyes of these accidental activists, we see the reality of a country in transition, where the personal stories of love and aspirations collide with history. A love letter to sisterhood and the power of teamwork, the film perfectly encapsulates the broader challenges facing women in contemporary Libyan society.

Director's Note

Filmed over five years, 'Freedom Fields' follows three women and their football team in post-revolution Libya, as the country descends into civil war and the utopian hopes of the Arab Spring begin to fade. Through the eyes of these accidental activists, we see the reality of a country in transition, where the personal stories of love and aspirations collide with history. An intimate film about hope, struggle and sacrifice in a land where dreams seem a luxury—a love letter to sisterhood and the power of teamwork.

Director's Biography

Naziha Arebi is a Libyan-British artist and filmmaker who returned to Libya after the revolution to work and explore her father's homeland. Naziha has produced various short films, worked extensively in the MENA region as a cinematographer and is a HotDocs Blue Ice and a Sundance Lab fellow. Her artwork has been published extensively in print and exhibited globally and alongside her first feature 'Freedom Fields', she is also producing 'After A Revolution', in collaboration with Met Film (UK), EIE Film (Italy) and Urban Republic (USA).

Company Profile

Huna Productions is a film production company focusing on women, civil society and film in Libya. A new organisation in a relatively new field in Libya, the company has already designed campaigns, produced short films, educational videos, conducted training and co-produced with international organisations.

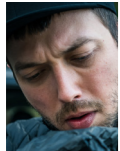
Post-Production

Feature Documentary

Fall Grants 2018

Ilya Povolotskiy

Director



Anna Shalashina

Producer



Contact

Black Chamber

Anna Shalashina

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Froth

'Pena' / Russia, Qatar / Russian / 2019

Runtime: 90

Genre: Creative Documentary, Social Issues

The story of three people living on the coast of the Barents Sea who are united by an incredible blend of humility, inherent rebelliousness, a very specific moral code, and their attitude towards life.



'Froth' depicts the customs and everyday life on the coast of the Barents Sea. At the heart of the narrative are the stories of three ordinary people. Bardak is a salty old sea dog, who after taking his pension opts to see out his years with hard work in an abandoned village on the very edge of the world. Sasha and his team of self-taught divers have taken the initiative to raise World War II shipwrecks, which the experts consider to be outside the realms of possibility. Young poacher Dima, whose sense of adventure and recklessness have earned him the nickname 'Catastrophe', manages to evade capture and read his daughter a fairy-tale all in one evening. The characters are united by an incredible blend of humility, inherent rebelliousness, a very specific moral code, and attitude towards life. Nowhere except for these hills and severe sea can they find peace, while they hustle through the days and the waves making froth.

Director's Note

The history of humankind is the history of conquest and assimilation. Capture, subordinate, build a wall and a city behind it at any cost. Abandoned garrisons and villages in the North of Russia show how futile and pointless all these incredible efforts were. After the epoch-making assimilation of the North by the Soviet Union, the outflow of population from the Barents Sea does not cease to this very day. Those who stayed can no longer subjugate the surrounding nature, but rather, on the contrary, have to subordinate their lives to natural cycles. Lonely old people blending into the tundra with their houses, sailors nostalgic about the former flotillas, fishermen who turned out to be outlawed in modern times. They are the characters of 'Froth'. They are inertia, like a once-engineered mechanism, they perform their rituals, constantly doing something, they flounder with all their might making froth.

Director's Biography

Ilya Povolotskiy graduated from the law department of the Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation in 2009, and founded Black Chamber film production. He started as a director of advertisements for leading international brands and his last commercial project 'Push the Limit' (2016) for Toyota Russia was awarded at the 27th Red Apple International Advertising Festival.

Company Profile

Black Chamber was founded by director Ilya Povolotskiy in 2009. Since then, Black Chamber has worked with many major international brands and received awards at advertisement festivals. The company has recently started producing films and its last film 'The Northerners' (Ilya Povolotskiy, 2017) premiered at 58th Krakow Film Festival.

Development

Feature Documentary
Spring Grants 2018

Qutaiba Barhamji

Director / Screenwriter



Karim Aitouna

Producer



Contact

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Gevar's Land

'Ard Gevar' / Syria, France, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 80

Genre: Social Issues, Immigration, Identity, Creative Documentary, Exile

A profound exploration of how an uprooted Syrian refugee finds a natural affinity with the new land he toils.



Over four seasons, we follow the labour-filled days of Gevar, a Syrian refugee, whose small garden on the outskirts of a housing project became his "raison d'être", or rather, "a reason to do". 'Gevar's Land' explores the mysterious power of the earth, and its capacity to restore an ineffable link between an exiled and uprooted man, and his new surroundings. The film questions the idea of territory, which often goes hand in hand with the need to erect borders. Here, what is mine, and there, what is yours.

Director's Note

Born and raised in Syria, I moved to Russia for study, before finding a new home in France where I've been living for 12 years. I'm another uprooted man, so to speak. What actually makes me Syrian rather than French? I've spent more of my life in Paris than anywhere else. So, what makes someone belong to a country? This is something I can't help wondering, is it by virtue of their land of birth? The language you speak or are able to learn? The culture you embrace? 'Wardé', my first short film, was written after seeing pictures of my childhood house devastated. Then it felt like the last ties with my homeland were brutally cut. In many aspects, 'Gevar's Land', explores the same obsessive question: how does the land, by working it, by farming it, forge such an organic tie between a man and himself? Gevar is a Syrian Marxist activist who took refuge in France after many years spent in opposition to the regime of Bashar al Assad. Farming, here in France, is all about combating slugs and depression, finding a new living space.

Director's Biography

Qutaiba Barhamji was born in Damascus, Syria, and speaks four languages fluently, Arabic, Russian, English and French. He has worked as a movie editor on several feature documentary films including 'The Magic Mountain' (Andrei Shtakleff, 2015), 'Guests' (Alexey Sukhovey, 2015) and 'Film-me' (Lera Latypova, 2015). His first short film 'Wardé' (2016), which was produced by Arte France, won several awards and obtained the CNC state grant.

Company Profile

Hautlesmains is a production company based in Lyon, France and founded by independent producers Karim Aitouna and Thomas Micoulet. The company aims to produce director-driven films with captivating stories that focus on social and multicultural matters. Previous credits include; 'I am the People' (2015) directed by Anna Roussillon, which was selected at ACID Cannes, awarded at Jihlava IDFF and Belfort Entrevues; 'The Night and the Kid' (2015) directed by David Yon, presented in World Premiere at the 65th Berlinale; 'Poisonous Roses' (2016) by Ahmed Fawzi Saleh, which premiered at IFF Rotterdam, 'Controfigura' (2017) by Ră di Martino selected at Biennale di Venezia, and 'Sans bruit, les figurants du désert' (2017) by MML Collective. Haut Les Mains is a member of the following networks; EAVE, Eurodoc, Atelier Network.

Development

Feature Documentary
Spring Grants 2018

Faïza Yakoubi

Director



Paula Tudor Cămîrzan

Producer



Contact

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Heights

Algeria, Romania, France, Qatar / Bengali

Runtime: 70

Genre: Social Issues, Immigration, Identity, Exile

Young Rohingya refugees fleeing persecution in Myanmar endeavour to overcome the hardships of everyday life in Kuala Lumpur.



Abdul'Rohim and his friends are young Rohingyas fleeing persecution in Myanmar to find refuge in Malaysia. They all live in the same village on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur. At nightfall, they leave to make money installing signboards across the city. Working conditions are dangerous as they climb without a harness, putting their lives at risk each second. Cut off from their home country; they meet after work in the village, where solidarity and secrecy are universal rules. Stateless and deprived of basic human and labour rights, at an age when everything is still possible, they carry on believing in a better future.

Director's Note

Following the events of August 2017, when thousands of Rohingyas were forced to flee Myanmar, I went to meet young Rohingyas refugees in Kuala Lumpur, a privileged safe haven. I wondered about the effects of the uprooting and displacement of these people from their homeland. The voluntary and impromptu meetings I have made had led me to ask several questions. How are these young men, who experience the persecution of their people from afar, affected by it? How does this young generation see its future? What are their dreams? My goal is to focus on the continuing revolt at a distance. The film will inquire into the ways these young men reconstruct themselves in exile, an antechamber between the ongoing harsh events from their past and their dreams for a better future.

Director's Biography

Faïza Yakoubi is a Franco-Algerian filmmaker. After working for several years in the field of communications, she undertook an MA in sociological film-making. There, she directed a short film on gender equality. In 2017 she directed, shot and edited a short documentary film, 'Mohamed and Mokhtar', about two old Maghrebian immigrants living in a shared apartment in Paris. Her single-shot film, 'In Rush to Take Time', was selected and projected at the "Les Rencontres du cinéma documentaire" festival in Paris.

Company Profile

Tudor & Blum Productions is a young production company based in Bucharest, run by Paula Tudor Cămîrzan and Nomi Blum. The company focuses on bringing out humanitarian, social and identity-related topics through narrative-driven films, transmedia and performing arts. Our aim is to collaborate with professionals coming from different socio-political contexts and encourage cultural exchange. We are interested in finding the best approach and treatment for each specific subject, through research and experimenting with form. We are currently working on projects in collaboration with Malaysia, South Africa and France.

Post-Production

Feature Documentary

Fall Grants 2018

Nacer Khemir

Director / Producer



Loving Wallada

Tunisia, Qatar / Spanish / 2019

Runtime: 95

Genre: Documentary, History, Art & Literature

The story of Al-Andalus in the 10th and 11th centuries, as seen through the figure of the Umayyad princess, Wallada—the first European woman to hold a literary salon.



Wallada, the only child of one of the last Umayyad caliphs, al-Mustakfi murdered in 1025, asserted herself throughout the 11th century as both a poetess and a free woman. The first European woman to hold a literary salon, she surrounded herself with the artistic and the cultured elite of Cordoba of the time. The film is both the portrait of this century, with its contrasts that saw both Ibn Hazm, author of 'Tawk al-Hamama', a manuscript on love and lovers, and the rise of the Andalusian poetry and chant, passing through the influence of Ziryab's school on music, fashion, fragrance and the formation of a refined elite that eventually spread all over al-Andalus and beyond. The film also tells Wallada and the great poet Ibn Zaydun's unhappy love story, while evocating the civil war and the fall of the Umayyad caliphate of al-Andalus.

Director's Note

'Loving Wallada' might be a rare film in these troubled times we are living. In my later works, I developed a search between image and narrative. But in this project, my goal is to shift the gaze and create a breach in the official history of humanism. This act is all the more necessary as a look of mistrust and denial surrounds Arab culture from all sides. This film is unique because of the quality of its speakers and the new illumination they give. I tried to accomplish this, despite the difficulties of production, in order to highlight the contribution of Arab culture in shaping the modern world. I chose a minimalist staging for the interviews, so I could focus on obtaining unparalleled testimonials and refreshing perspectives. In his latest film presented in Cannes 'The Book of Image', Jean Luc Godard chose four sequences of my films, 'The Warders of the Desert', 'Bab'Aziz, the Prince who Contemplated his Soul' and 'Scheherazade or Words Against Death'. My new film, 'Loving Wallada', continues for me this quest for another relationship to the image, another relationship to the story, another relationship to history.

Director's Biography

Through cinema, painting and sculpture, not to mention calligraphy, writing and storytelling, **Nacer Khemir** has thrown bridges between two shores, between the North and the South, the East and the West. His literary work comprises a dozen publications, and his production is still growing. His artistic work was the occasion of many exhibitions, at the Georges Pompidou Center, and the Museum of Modern Art in Paris. He is also writer and producer of many films which won several international awards at festivals all around the world, and has been honoured several times for his artistic work.

Company Profile

Wallada Production is a production company for feature and documentary films, created by director Nacer Khemir in 2009 to produce his own films after he co-produced his film 'Bab Aziz, the prince who contemplated his soul' (2005). Wallada Production has produced many documentaries and feature films since its creation, namely; 'En Passant, Avec André Miquel' (2010); 'Sheherazade' (2011); 'Looking for Muhyiddin' (2012/2013); 'Yasmina or the 60 Names of Love' (2014); 'Where to start?' (2015); 'Whispering Sands' (2017). The company is currently producing Nacer Khemir's feature documentary 'Loving Wallada'.

Contact

Wallada Production

Nacer Khemir

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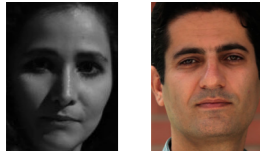
Post-Production

Feature Documentary

Fall Grants 2018

Atieh Attarzadeh, Hesam Eslami

Co-directors



Etienne De Ricaud

Producer



Contact

Caractères Productions

Etienne De Ricaud

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The Marriage Project

'Projeyeh ezdevaj' / Iran, France, Qatar / Farsi / 2019

Runtime: 80

Genre: Documentary, Social Issues, Identity, Family

A donator agrees to finance apartments to be used by future married couples among mentally ill patients in a southern Tehran caring centre. The proposal proves to be a controversial one though, as it goes against the traditional policy of prohibiting relationships between patients.



In southern Tehran, Ehsan House is an institute funded by private donators that has taken care of mentally ill patients for 20 years. Over four hundred men and women live in separate units, with no hope of living outside. In 2017, a donator offers to fund the construction of a building of marital facilities for patients who would marry within the institute. Most of the experts are firmly against this proposal, but this is not the opinion of the head of the Center for whom the right to love is a basic right; he therefore orders his colleagues to enable the formation of suitable couples. Are patients capable of shaping a relationship that leads to marriage? How is it possible to fulfill their desire and right to a private life, while taking into consideration all the difficulties associated with their illness?

Director's Note

This is the first time that a project of marriage has been proposed in such a centre in Iran, and the world as far as we know. As Ehsan House's management has complete trust in us due to a previous collaboration on a short documentary, we have had so far, full access to all units and patients. In our personal life, among our relatives, both of us have been confronted with mental illnesses. This is the main reason why mental disorders and the institutionalised lives of suffering patients have become a central focus of our work, leading to short documentaries and educational videos on the subject. Ehsan House reflects our Iranian society and its dilemmas on gender relationships. We also wish to confront through this film the biases and stereotypes surrounding the mentally ill in our country and elsewhere.

Directors' Biography

Atieh Attarzadeh holds a BA and Master's in Cinema studies from the University of Tehran, as well as a Master's in Documentary Practice from the University of Bristol. She directed the short documentary films '40 Days of Pine' (2016), '17 Years Old' (2014), and 'I Am An Ordinary Woman' (2010). She is also a writer, whose works were published at the prestigious Cheshmeh editing house, including 'Ride the horse in a half of yourself' (2015) and 'The guide to dying with herbs' (2016).

Hesam Eslami was born in 1982 in Ahwaz, south of Iran. He received his BFA and MA in cinema from Tehran University of Art. Since 2009, he has worked as an editor and director and made documentaries for television. Juvenile offenders and social damages are the main themes of his work. In 2017, his first feature documentary, '20th Circuit Suspects' was selected in competition at Hot Docs. He attended the Berlinale Talent Campus in 2018, where he pitched his new project on gold searchers in Iran.

Company Profile

Etienne de Ricaud launched Caractères Productions in 2015 in Paris, after working for the French production company Why Not Productions. He first co-produced 'A Minor Leap Down' by Hamed Rajabi (Berlinale Panorama 2015 - Fipresci award), and produced Esmaeel Monsef's first fiction feature film 'Kömür' (currently submitted to festivals), both films shot in Iran. Etienne is also working in Azerbaijan where he coproduced Elvin Adigozel's second feature 'Reporting from Darkness' (2018), selected at FID Marseille. Caractères Productions is producing more documentary and fiction films, mainly in the Middle East and South America.

Post-Production

Feature Documentary
Spring Grants 2018

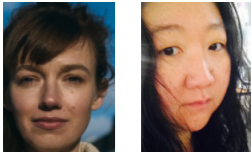
Hassan Fazili

Director



Emelie Mahdavian, Su Kim

Producers



Midnight Traveler

Afghanistan, USA, UK, Canada, Qatar / Dari / 2019

Runtime: 90

Genre: War, Family, Exile

When the Taliban puts a bounty on Afghan director Hassan Fazili's head, he is forced to flee with his wife and two young daughters. Capturing their uncertain journey, Fazili shows firsthand the dangers facing refugees seeking asylum and the love shared between a family on the run.



Director's Note

The film is about emigration, but it does not impose any genre or style. Working with mobile phones, we discovered a method of framing and camera movement that captures the experience of our family on the run. At the same time, we are working to intertwine our reflections on the journey in order to expand the interiority of the characters. My wife is also a filmmaker, and my older daughter has acted small parts in films. They participate in the filmmaking, conveying their personal experiences in ways that I could not have captured myself. Our project is a collaboration, and we are all camera operators on this film.

Director's Biography

Hassan Fazili has created theatre, documentaries, short films, and several popular television serials in Afghanistan. In 2011, he was selected by the British Council to attend Sheffield/DocFest for documentary filmmaking, networking and training. His films 'Mr. Fazili's Wife' and 'Life Again!', both push the envelope on issues of women's, children's and disability rights in Afghanistan, and have screened and won awards at numerous international festivals. He also worked as a Location Manager for Feo Aladag's 'In Between Worlds', which premiered at Berlinale 2014, and as a Camera Operator for the IDFA selection 'Voice of A Nation: My Journey Through Afghanistan'.

Company Profile

Old Chilly Pictures was founded by 'Midnight Traveler' producer and editor, Emelie Mahdavian, in 2017.

Post-Production

Feature Documentary

Fall Grants 2018

Hamida Issa

Director



Justin Kramer

Producer



Contact

The Film House

Justin Kramer

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Places of The Soul

Qatar / Arabic, English / 2021

Runtime: 75

Genre: Creative Documentary, Identity, Environmental, Culture

A Qatari woman travels on an environmental expedition to Antarctica in search of hope for a sustainable future before returning to Qatar in search of inspiration to make positive change.



The story of 'Places Of The Soul' begins in Ushuaia, Argentina and follows an environmental expedition to Antarctica, exploring the dreams of individuals to contribute positively to their communities. The journey continues to the Arabian Gulf, in search of inspiring characters who are working toward environmental change. Antarctica serves as a beautiful reminder of what we once were, and contrasts with the rich cultural tapestry of the Gulf, specifically Qatar, and those who are united in their passionate dedication to sustainability and hope for our future. At the heart of the film is the juxtaposition of two deserts: Antarctica and Arabia; ice and sand.

Director's Note

I will always remember the magnitude of the journey that took me to the ends of the Earth. Antarctica, the seventh continent, the last frontier, has defined the majority of my adult life. Venturing out on this expedition gave me a sense of hope and purpose at a time when I was floating through life, searching for meaning. Little did I know that venturing the furthest I have ever been from home made me feel closer to home. It filled me with a sense of responsibility to express the realities of what humanity is doing to the natural world and how we are complicit in the disturbances. Not only do I want this film to document my evolution as a human being, I want it to inspire others to change and become more aware, no matter how small it may be. This film is an existential expression of modern existence and our relationship with the environment and spiritual identity.

Director's Biography

Hamida Issa is a Qatari director, writer and producer. She graduated with a BA in Politics from University College London and a MA in Global Cinemas and the Transcultural from the School of Oriental and African Studies. Issa worked for the education team at the Doha Film Institute at its inception and made her first short film, '15 Heartbeats', which premiered at the Doha Tribeca Film Festival, in 2011. She has made numerous short films since, which include a music video and a video art installation. She is the first Qatari woman in history to step foot on Antarctica and is currently making her first feature-length documentary, 'Places of the Soul', which considers her experience and environmental sustainability.

Company Profile

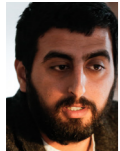
The Film House is a Doha-based film, video, photography and multi-media production company. Its talented team of experienced and creative storytellers, documentarians, animators, photographers, and film directors cover all aspects of projects, from idea generation through post-production. Not a traditional production company, The Film House offers flexible production to facilitate a range of requirements. With a wealth of local knowledge and 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 a home for high-calibre international productions that want to come to town and place Qatar in the spotlight.

Production

Feature Documentary
Spring Grants 2018

Amer Mattar

Director



Talal Derki

Producer



Contact

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Plastic Flowers

'azhar alblastyk' / Syria, Germany, Sweden, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 80

Genre: Documentary, Politics, War

A documentary about a family's difficult search to discover the fate of a journalist abducted to the jails of ISIS in August 2013.



A documentary about the experience of enforced disappearance in the prisons of ISIS told through the story of searching for the filmmaker's brother Mohammed Nour Matar. Mohammed was a 24-year-old photographer when he went missing in 2013, taken after a car-bombing at the railway station in Raqqa. Using cameras during the search, the family depicts their stories in the Syrian city of Raqqa and the abandoned prisons of ISIS.

Director's Note

My brother Mohammed Nour started to make this film, but after ISIS kidnapped him in 2013, I continued his work to ensure that the film he risked his life for would not be in vain. I wish to tell the story of my little brother to a broad audience. It's a family story, but it addresses the meaning and the pain of enforced disappearance in general. Mohammed Nour's story is one of 8 000 disappeared. The defeat of ISIS in my hometown Raqqa was internationally seen as a relief, but we locals also expected our loved ones to return from ISIS prisons, which in most cases never came true. Besides the reconstruction of our homes, we need to search now for our disappeared, and I do this as a filmmaker and a brother in my own personal way, through the telling of Mohammed's story.

Director's Biography

Amer Mattar is a Syrian documentary filmmaker, journalist and writer, born in 1986. He started working as a freelance journalist in 2002, predominantly writing political satire and cultural reviews. Since the uprising in Syria, Mattar started documentary filmmaking. He co-directed and produced a handful of short documentaries that have been broadcast by regional Pan-Arab TV stations. Mattar is also a cultural activist and co-founder and Chairman of Al Sharee for Development & Media 2011, and Co-founder of Syria Mobile Film Festival, launched in 2014.

Company Profile

Al Share3 Film Production was founded in Damascus in 2010 and got licensed in France in 2013. It focuses on the production of documentary films about Syria and the Middle East. One part of Al Share3 Film Production is the Syria Mobile Film Festival, licensed in Berlin.

Post-Production

Feature Documentary

Fall Grants 2018

Marija Stojnić

Director / Producer



Milos Ivanovic

Producer



Contact

Bilboke

Marija Stojnic

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Speak So I Can See You

'Govori da bih te video' / Serbia, Croatia, Qatar / Serbo-Croatian / 2019

Runtime: 75

Genre: Creative Documentary, Art & Literature, History

Set at the intersection of an observational documentary and an audio-visual experiment, this film connects the strangers from opposite ends of the radio signal and reimagines the role of old-school, live, spoken-word radio in contemporary life.



The story follows the daily life of Radio Belgrade - one of Europe's oldest and Serbia's only radio station that still broadcasts cultural, scientific, art and drama programming today. A guide through the world of its creators and listeners becomes the Radio itself, as an omnipotent protagonist, with its own will and intentions.

Director's Note

I first discovered the inner world of Radio Belgrade during frequent visits to its drama department as a student, only to return to it many years later, as an avid listener. I was astounded by the effect that the radiophonic sound had on my perception of everyday life and my thinking process. I wanted to explore the radio not only as a laboratory of sound, but as a living, conscious protagonist, aware of its reach and programming. In directing approach, a traditional observational method is combined with unconventionally composed shots and extreme angles, in order to expand the spatiality of sound. Visual tranquillity and distinct editing choices pull the viewer into the world of radiophonic sound and silence, and discover the relationship with the physical space they inhabit. Through intuitive yet precise dramaturgy, we seek to critically reflect on the present moment through the inner logic of one timeless being.

Director's Biography

Marija Stojnić directs films that blur borders between documentary and fiction, and is an alumna of The New School, MA Media Studies (New York) and Academy of Arts (Belgrade). In 2016, Marija founded the production house Bilboke in Serbia. 'Speak So I Can See You' is her feature-length directorial debut. Marija is a member of DOKSerbia, New York Foundation for the Arts Fellow for 2015 and a Brazilian Instituto Sacatar fellow for 2017.

Company Profile

Bilboke is a young production company dedicated to delivering creative documentaries that intersect with other art forms. Its debut project 'Speak So I Can See You' has been supported by Film Center Serbia, Eurimages and Doha Film Institute.

Post-Production

Feature Documentary

Fall Grants 2018

Suhaib Gasmelbari

Director



Marie Balducchi

Producer



Contact

AGAT Films & Cie

Marie Balducchi

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Talking About Trees

'Al hadith 'an al'ashjar' / Sudan, France, Germany, Chad, Qatar / Arabic / 2019

Runtime: 94

Genre: Documentary, Identity, Social Issues, War

The story of four Sudanese filmmakers united by an old friendship, as they try to inspire the love of cinema in a deeply wounded country.



Filmmakers Ibrahim, Soliman, Manar and Altayeb have been friends for over 45 years, idealists and intensely human. After long years of distance and exile, they are reunited to breathe life back into their old dream: make cinema a reality in Sudan. They are determined to leave a trace of their passage and to inspire the love of cinema across the country. Throughout the images they created, those that have been lost or remain a desire, the beautiful and horrific sides of their country appear.

Director's Note

"Why did you return back to Sudan, what do you want to do? Go back to Europe, make European movies or sit here with us on our waiting bench?" That is the dilemma my Sudanese elders gave me. The elders in question are the filmmakers who founded the Sudanese Film Group in 1989. They are now aged between 70 and 83 and travel throughout the country with a small mobile cinema that they have founded. They pass their knowledge on to people and inspire the love of cinema, despite the hardships and despite their canvas screen that cannot withstand storms. This is the tale of their 45 years of attempting to make films and of the tireless hope that unites them forever. The story of a struggle of a gang of four crafty men with a witty sense of humour.

Director's Biography

Suhaib Gasmelbari Mustafa

was born in 1979 in Sudan, where he lived until the age of 16. He attended Cinema Studies in France at the University Paris VIII and has worked as a freelance cameraman and editor, collaborating with journalists to direct reports for Al Qarra, Al Jazeera and France 24. He has written and directed multiple short films, both fiction and documentary. 'Talking About Trees' is his first feature film. Suhaib Gasmelbari is also a researcher and was able to find precious lost Sudanese films and took part in saving and digitising them through his work.

Company Profile

AGAT Films & Cie / Ex Nihilo is a collective grouping of eight producers inspired by shared values that do not rule out each other's point of view and sensitivity. This respect of difference is the basis of a company philosophy that strives to preserve the balance between a principle of pleasure (each producer's desire) and a principle of reality (the smooth running of the company). This basic structure has allowed the company to produce in a wide variety of genres: original documentaries, scientific programming, animated films, theme evenings, live performances, films for the cinema, series, TV-movies, among others. This synergy, this continual movement between documentary and fiction, is viewed by the collective as one of the ways to explore our relationship with our times, to participate in the understanding and questioning of the age. Recent credits include 'The Villa' (2017) by Robert Guédiguian; 'The Young Karl Marx' (2017) by Raoul Peck; 'The Aquatic Effect' (2016) by Solveig Anspach; 'A Young Girl in Her Nineties' (2016) by Valeria Bruni-Tedeschi; 'The Other Side' (2015) by Roberto Minervini; and 'National Diploma' (2014) by Dieudo Hamadi.

Production

Feature Documentary
Fall Grants 2018

Farah Kassem

Director



Cynthia Choucair

Producer



Contact

Road 2 Films
Cynthia Choucair
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We Are Inside

'Nahnou Fil Dakhel' / Lebanon, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 90

Genre: Creative Documentary, Identity, Literature, War

Returning to her father's house in the radicalised city of Tripoli, Farah realises that the only way to connect with him is by joining his male-dominated poetry club.



Being away for a decade, Farah returns to her father's place in her hometown Tripoli, Lebanon. After the loss of his wife, Mustapha spends his days watching television and writing poetry. One day, he invites her to his hidden universe: a poetry club of retired men who write in a sophisticated Classical Arabic, alien to Farah. While the poets are in their refuge, their city grows more conservative. Whenever Farah tries to revolt against the social norms adopted by their community, Mustapha becomes frustrated. And because of the apathy of her father's aging generation, Farah worries she is to inherit a city less secular than the one her father once knew; a city turning into a bubble. In order to understand their political submissiveness, Farah needs to understand the old men's poetry. She decides to challenge herself and join the club, to become the first female member.

Director's Note

My father Mustapha is 52 years older than me and lives in Tripoli (Lebanon), a city known for its rising tension. He loves to share his poetry with me, but I don't understand his words. I dislike poetry as I feel that it over-romanticises times that no longer exist. He and his fellow poets belong to a generation who once dreamt of a secular united Arab world. With the rise of conflicts in the region, the civil war and finally Islamic radicalisation as a consequence, they became overshadowed, sharing the remains of their identity in a closed space, where a sophisticated Classical Arabic has become their tool of alienation. Today I am back to my father's house, and to a conservative city, I no longer recognise. In 'We Are Inside', joining my father's poetry club is a way to indulge in the understanding of a generation and an Arab city that belongs neither to him nor to me.

Director's Biography

Born in Tripoli, Lebanon, **Farah Kassem** graduated from ALBA University in 2008 with a bachelor in Audio Visual studies. Since 2008, Farah has been working as a director, editor and cinematographer on several documentaries. Her filmography includes short documentaries that premiered in renowned film festivals like Visions du Réel, Warsaw Film Festival, DOK Leipzig, Dubai International Film Festival and others. She recently completed her master's degree in documentary filmmaking at DocNomads, a mobile Film School in Documentary Directing taking place in Lisbon, Budapest and Brussels.

Company Profile

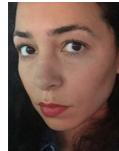
Founded in 2007, Road 2 Films is a Lebanese production house specialised in producing documentaries, cultural and social TV programs as well as fiction films, online content and TV Ads. Road 2 Films is the continuation of the long-experienced path of its founders who have been working since 1995 as independent producers and directors for both Arabic and European television networks.

Development

Feature Documentary
Fall Grants 2018

Ager Oueslati

Director



Belkacem Hadjadj

Producer



Contact

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ageroueslati@gmail.com

You Don't Die Two Times

'On ne meurt pas deux fois' / Algeria, Qatar / Arabic, French

Runtime: 90

Genre: Creative Documentary, Immigration, Women's Issues

Jenny and Gift fled their home countries in Africa in the hope of a better life in Europe. A migratory odyssey fraught with violence, smugglers, and closed borders, where the three women attempt to reach their 'El Dorado' at any price.



Jenny and Gift, two sisters respectively 22 and 28 years old, are in North Niger, waiting to travel to Europe. They left Lagos, Nigeria, to join a smuggler in Agades. Upon their arrival, the initial price of their journey doubled and their smuggler forced them into prostitution. Without any representation in this country, they have no other choice. Kilometres from there, Prisca left Ivory Coast for Tunis, in the hope of reaching Europe. She heard about an Ivorian middle-man, who could help her reach the European "El Dorado". When Prisca left her job in Abidjan, she entrusted her children to her sister before leaving the country. Since then, she has entered the hell that is the slave trade. Forced to work for a Tunisian family, and taken on a route with no return, she made her way to Libya, before dying in the Mediterranean Sea in September 2016.

Director's Note

Since 2014, I have worked on migration issues, from the camp of Calais, in the North of France. I was surprised to see only men (migrants and refugees) answering the journalists' questions; never women. That's why I decided to follow the women on the road, between Niger, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. In this way, I first met Prisca, then Jen and Gift. They told me about the war, the forced marriage they fled, and the sexual mutilations they suffered back home. After Prisca's death at sea, my desire to make this documentary was reinforced. She had agreed to tell me her story to warn other women, who might be potential victims of illegal migration. Today I invest myself in this mission, and I want to highlight their story. I want to enter their world and show their life that nobody can imagine, in this world of extreme violence, to get them out of the mass of "Migrants" flocking to the coasts of Europe. What happens to migrant women, when men are sold through markets in Libya? That's why I chose to shoot their stories intimately and face-to-face, taking the time to tell their unique stories.

Director's Biography

Ager Oueslati grew up like many immigrant children from the 1970s-80s in the Parisian suburbs, or what she calls the Babel Tower where families had left their home country for different reasons. Her father fled Bourguiba's Tunisia, while her mother left her native Algeria. They met in Paris and named their firstborn Ager, which means migration. After graduating in journalism, Ager worked on the television documentary 'The Women's Jungle' (2016), about the condition of immigrant women stuck in the camp of Calais.

Company Profile

Machahou Production was founded in 1999 by Belkacem Hadjadj, an Algerian director and writer whose previous films include 'Machahou' (1995), 'The Woman Taxi Driver of Sidi Bel-Abbès' (2000) and 'La Goutte' (1990). Initially producing fiction films, 'You Don't Die Two Times' is their first documentary film.

Production

Feature Experimental or Essay
Fall Grants 2018

Ali Cherri
Director



Janja Kralj
Producer



Contact

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The Dam

Lebanon, France, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 70

Genre: Experimental, Arthouse

Abu Salma, a seasonal worker in Northern Sudan, spends his days labouring in a brickyard and his nights secretly erecting a structure out of mud in secret. When his creation mysteriously disappears, strange occurrences begin to take place and he starts to get the uneasy feeling that someone or something is watching him.



North Sudan, Merowe Dam. Abu Salma, a seasonal worker from Darfur, works in a traditional brickyard on the Nile, downstream of the dam. Just like his exiled companions, he spends his days in the mud, far from his loved ones and in exhausting labour. Each night, he secretly works on the erection of a structure, a tall shape made out of mud, wood, and plastic. As the mud builds over the solid skeleton of the structure, it begins to take on an almost organic-looking form. One day, as he returns from Jebel Barkal, the mystical mountain, his creation has mysteriously disappeared. Soon strange occurrences begin to take place, and Abu Salma starts to get the uneasy feeling that someone or something is watching him.

Director's Note

'The Dam' is the final part of a "telluric trilogy" that includes my two previous films, 'The Disquiet' and 'The Digger'. All three films are interested in looking at soil as a site of manifestation of socio-economic tensions, ecological catastrophes, and as the peripheral material from which "the centre" is constructed. The film follows Abu Salma, a seasonal worker in a traditional brickyard on the Nile, downstream of the Merowe Dam in Northern Sudan. Just like his exiled companions, Abu Salma spends his days in the mud, far from his loved ones and in exhausting labour. While the workers have been dislocated and reshaped by geopolitical forces, perhaps they are equally capable of fashioning something out of the very material of their estrangement.

Director's Biography

Ali Cherri is a filmmaker and visual artist based in Beirut and Paris. His work has been screened at festivals such as New Directors/ New Films, MoMA NY, Cinéma du Réel, CPH: DOX (NewVision prize), Dubai International Film Festival (Best Director prize), Berlinale, Toronto, and San Francisco. He's had exhibitions at the Jeu de Paume, the Jönköpings läns Museum, Sweden, the Sursock Museum, and Beirut among others. His works have been presented in numerous international expositions, including Centre Pompidou or the Guggenheim New York. Ali Cherri has received the Harvard University's Robert E. Fulton Fellowship, the Rockefeller Foundation Prize and the Abraaj Group Art Prize.

Company Profile

KinoElektron is a production company based in Paris, founded by Janja Kralj. The company is committed to international cinema working with confirmed directors and emerging talents. Their latest productions are 'Good Luck' by Ben Russell (Locarno Film Festival 2017- Official competition), 'Frost' by Sharunas Bartas (Cannes Film Festival 2017 - Director's Fortnight, and Lithuania's pick for the Academy Awards), 'Strange Birds' by Elise Girard (Berlin Film Festival 2017 - Forum) and 'Son of Sofia' by Elina Psykou (Best International Narrative Feature Award at Tribeca Film Festival 2017). KinoElektron is currently developing feature and short films projects by Raphaël Nadjari, Sharunas Bartas, Vladimir Perisic, Bani Khoshnoudi and visual artists Ali Cherri and Nir Evron, among others.

Production

Feature Experimental or Essay
Fall Grants 2018

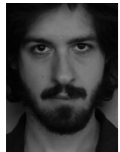
Yosr Gasmı

Director / Producer



Mauro Mazzocchi

Producer



The Earth Doesn't Move

'La Terre Ne Se Meut Pas' / Tunisia, France, Italy, Qatar /
Arabic, French, Italian

Runtime: 90

Genre: Creative Documentary, Experimental, Arthouse, Immigration

This is a contemporary story about migration, borders and an eternal wanderer. It's about exile and space, movement and the human race.



In a three-star hotel converted into a reception centre for political refugees, people wait to cross the France-Italy border. 'The Earth Doesn't Move' follows this moving and suspended image.

Director's Note

'The Earth Doesn't Move' is a documentary early in the production stage. The film offers an insight into the daily life of a reception centre for asylum applicants in the north of Italy. It is an escape path to borders between Italy and France, a crossing point heavily supervised by authorities. The film is an attempt to think about frontier laws and to understand how the political system is governing illegal migrants in Europe. At the same time, the documentary explores, more generally, power and domination mechanisms in today's societies.

Director's Biography

Yosr Gasmı, born in 1984 in Tunisia, is a graduate of French Language and Literature from Paris-Sorbonne University and the Ecole Normale Supérieure of Tunis. She has a particular interest in the image, under its diverse artistic and scriptural expressions. As an independent director, she collaborated with Mauro Mazzocchi in writing and producing their first feature film 'I Want to Be Mad, Raving Mad - L.E.N.Z.-' (2016).

Company Profile

The production company L'Argent was created in 2015 by a group of filmmakers who worked together for many years. It defends creative and research cinema that seeks to explore boundaries of documentary and fiction. Established on a framework of common concerns, approaches and experiences, the L'Argent company supports in its operations the "horizontal" of relations and projects, and emphasises the fact that films must be made according to own available means, which differ 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 et Pierre Selvini.

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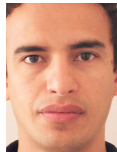
Production

Feature Experimental or Essay
Fall Grants 2018

Karima Saïdi
Director



Karim Aitouna
Producer



Contact

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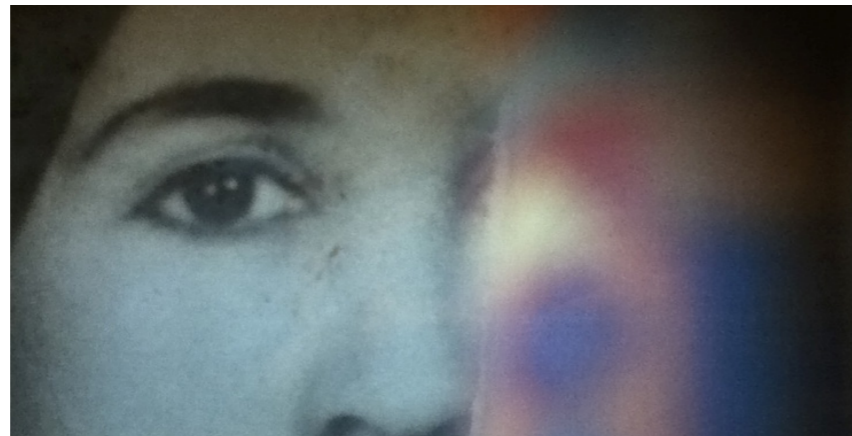
It's Far Away Where I Must Go

'C'est loin où je dois aller' / Morocco, Belgium, Qatar / Arabic / 2019

Runtime: 65

Genre: Creative Documentary, Identity, Immigration, Exile

Pioneer of the Moroccan migration to Belgium, Aïcha is buried in Brussels. The movie walks in the footsteps she left along the way from Tangiers to Brussels.



At the age of 70, my mother Aïcha lost the notion of time and space. Forced to live in a nursing home for people with Alzheimer's, Aïcha wants to leave. It does not matter where, she does not know herself - as long as she is freed of this oppressive disease. Faced with this obsessing notion of departure, I decided to record her life and to look into her memories. From Tangier to Brussels, guided by our two voices, the viewer finds himself immersed in an intimate story. He discovers, in fragments and in the form of evocation, the journey of a tragic heroine, pioneer of the first generation of Moroccan immigrant women in Belgium, who has tried all her life to escape her destiny as a submissive wife.

Director's Note

The film is a frank and sincere conversation between me and my mother in a particular moment of our lives. It highlights a pioneer of the Moroccan community in Brussels, an ordinary heroine who tries all her life to reconcile tradition and modernity. Beyond this familial story, the film talks about the North African immigration in Europe in an original way, through the eyes of two women of different generations.

Director's Biography

Karima Saïdi is a Belgo-Moroccan documentary film editor whose work includes 'Une femme taxi à Sidi Bel Abes' (2000) by Belkacem Hadjaj; 'Les damnés de la mer' (2008) by Jawad Rhaleb; and as a fictional script supervisor 'Le cochon de Gaza' (2011) by Sylvain Estibal; 'A perdre la raison' (2012) by Joachim Lafosse. Karima has also served as a documentary sound director. She teaches at Marrakech's Ecole Supérieure des Arts Visuels and has worked with Moroccan, Algerian and Palestinian filmmakers. Her ambition is to experiment and use her double culture to forge links between the two shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

Company Profile

Waq Waq is a film studio and a production company based in Tangier, Morocco. Our last productions are 'Contro Figura' by Ra Di Martino, selected at the Venice International Film Festival 2017 and 'Renault 12' (2018) by Mohamed Al Khatib, selected at the Marrakech and Premiers Plans Angers international film festivals.

Post-Production

Feature Experimental or Essay
Fall Grants 2018

Lemohang Jeremiah Mosese
Director / Producer



Mother, I Am Suffocating. This Is My Last Film About You.

Lesotho, Germany, Qatar / Sesotho, English / 2019

Runtime: 70

Genre: Experimental, Arthouse, Identity

An exhibition of stolen memories and open wounds, the film is a symbolic social-political voyage of a society, spiralling between religion, identity and collective consciousness—a farewell letter and furious lamentation to a mother, a land, a hero, a victim, and a martyr.



The wastelands and crowded streets of an African country are traversed by a woman bearing a wooden cross on her back. She is followed by sellers, beggars and passersby, outraged voices, pity and curious glances. Parallel to her, among a herd of sheep, a lamb toddles its way from the far away mountains into the heart of the city, only to find itself dangling, skinned and headless, on a butcher's shoulder. In the meantime, under the scorching sun, in a roofless house, a woman is persistently knitting a garment, unwinding a thread coiled over her son's face. 'Mother, I Am Suffocating. This is My Last Film About You' is a symbolic social-political voyage of a society, spiralling between religion, identity and collective memory. "I saw in you what they saw, mother. You deserve your war".

Contact

Mokoari Street
Lemohang Jeremiah Mosese
jmosese@gmail.com

Director's Note

There are countless books written about Africa as if it's a country, and as if all the people in it have the same mindset. In 'Mother I'm Suffocating', I commit the same transgression. I address Africa as a country; in fact, I personify it as a mother. By embodying it as a mother, I might have allowed myself, for the first time, to see Africa through the pure eyes of a child. With love, with fury; with vileness and self-loathing. I look at my country, my continent as an impartial outsider. If in my last films, I have upheld a noble and god-like image about Africa; in 'Mother I'm Suffocating' I am pointing one damning finger at her. My film unfolds as a trivial breach of etiquette. It comments on the transformation and destruction of African society, at in the same breath it speaks of its re-birth.

Director's Biography

Lemohang Jeremiah Mosese is a Lesotho self-taught filmmaker. Two of his short films, 'Mosonngoa' (2014) and 'Behemoth - or the Game of God' (2015), have been screened in numerous international film festivals, including the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival, Raindance International Film Festival, Kinodot Film Festival, Festival del Cinema Africano, d'Asia e America Latina, as well as the Durban International Film Festival and L'Étrange Festival. Mosese is also an alumnus of the Berlinale Talent Campus (2012), Focus Features Africa First Short Film Program (2012), Realness Screenwriter's Residency (2017), and Final Cut in Venice workshop (2018).

Company Profile

Founded in 2009 in Lesotho, Mokoari Street is a production company and artists collective with a decidedly artistic aspiration, run by independent filmmakers Lemohang Jeremiah Mosese (Lesotho, South Africa) and Hannah Stockmann (Germany). Mokoari Street is committed to socially critical issues, backed by the belief that the mass-media are a fundamental factor in changing perspectives within a given society. Mokoari Street is a place of creation, training and exchanges in diverse forms of art. Their works range from essays, video art, fiction and documentary films. They collaborate with a wide range of artists overtime, including video artists, painters, writers, visual artists, graphic designers and sound-designers.

Post-Production

Feature Experimental or Essay
Fall Grants 2018

Mariam Ghani

Director / Producer



Alysa Nahmias

Producer



Contact

Indexical Films
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What We Left Unfinished

'Gozashta-e ma na tamam shud' / Afghanistan, USA, Qatar / Dari / 2019

Runtime: 72

Genre: Creative Documentary, History, Identity, Politics, Art & Literature

'What We Left Unfinished' tells the incredible and mostly true story of five unfinished feature films from the Communist era in Afghanistan, and the people who went to crazy lengths to keep making films in a time when films were weapons and filmmakers became targets.



'What We Left Unfinished' tells the incredible and mostly true story of five unfinished feature films from the Communist era in Afghanistan (1978-1991), and the people who went to crazy lengths to keep making films in a time when films were weapons, filmmakers became targets, and the dreams of constantly shifting political regimes merged with the stories told on-screen. Archival fictions, present-day recollections, and Afghanistan's both imagined and real slip and slide into each other in a film that reminds us that nations are inventions, and films can reinvent them.

Director's Note

I first visited Afghan Films, the national film institute of Afghanistan, in 2011. The films in their archive had survived the civil war, Taliban years, and US invasion. But they were disorganised and on the brink of deteriorating. Over many visits since, I have worked with Afghan Films and other partners to preserve, re-catalogue, digitise and disseminate those films. 'What We Left Unfinished' was born from that long, complicated relationship, made up of equal parts affection and frustration. As I reassembled film fragments and people who had been scattered by war, I realised that the process of making the film was mirroring a larger process happening in Afghanistan, whereby the fraught, unsettled, and contested histories of the Communist period are gradually surfacing into public discourse. But certain facts are still easier to face when presented as fictions. 'What We Left Unfinished' is about fiction films that often blurred the line between document and fiction. Real soldiers enacting fictional sieges, real bullets in prop guns, real consequences for fake events. Likewise, my film plays on the gaps between film and history, ideal and reality, and past and present Afghanistan. It is also a film about the histories left untold: the contradictions and omissions in the stories both people and nations tell about their pasts.

Director's Biography

Director and producer **Mariam Ghani's** films and installations have been presented at IFFR, CPH: DOX, Transmediale, Lincoln Center, MoMA, the National Gallery, Documenta, CCCB in Barcelona, Garage in Moscow, and the Liverpool, Sharjah and Gwangju Biennials. They are also in the permanent collections of the Guggenheim, the Saint Louis Art Museum, the Indianapolis Museum of Art, the Arab American National Museum, the Sharjah Art Foundation (UAE), and the Devi Art Foundation (India). She has won a number of awards and fellowships, most recently the Changemaker Storyteller Award from the Center for Constitutional Rights. 'What We Left Unfinished' is her first feature film.

Company Profile

Indexical Films is Mariam Ghani's umbrella for collaborative productions. As a visual artist and independent filmmaker, Mariam Ghani has produced or co-produced 27 short films and multiple-channel installations, six transmedia projects, live cinema events, and a number of traveling film programs, exhibitions, conferences, and discussions, with production partners including Alternet, Creative Time, Die Zeit, Asia Art Archive, Asian Contemporary Art Week, New York University, the Queens Museum of Art, the Sharjah Art Foundation, the Dhaka Art Summit, Secession in Vienna, the Wellcome Collection in the UK, the Rogaland Kunstsenter in Stavanger, and the Goethe Institute in Kabul. Her films and installations have been presented and collected by museums, festivals, and biennials across the USA, UK, Europe, Asia and the Middle East. Her transmedia work has been nominated for the Ars Electronica award and preserved by the Rhizome ArtBase for Net Art Anthology, its history of net art in 100 works. Ghani has received a number of awards, grants and fellowships, most recently the inaugural Changemaker Storyteller Award from the Center for Constitutional Rights. Indexical Films is producing 'What We Left Unfinished' in cooperation with consulting producer Alysa Nahmias (Ajna Films), field producer Ali Latifi and Ryan Lee Gallery.

Short Narrative

Al-Sit

The Bath

Border

Brotherhood

The Bystander

Gubgub

How My Grandmother Became a Chair

Lemon Hart

Me, Myself and A.I.

Prisoner and Jailer

Rest in Piece

The Unlucky Hamster

The Wake

Short Experimental or Essay

The Blue Star

This Haunting Memory That Is Not My Own

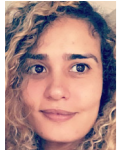
Production

Short Narrative

Fall Grants 2018

Suzannah Mirghani

Director / Screenwriter



Eiman Mirghani

Producer



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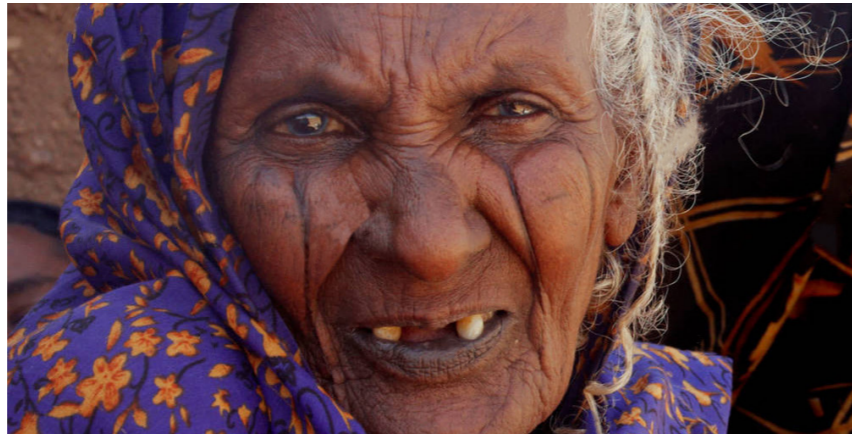
Al-Sit

Sudan, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 15

Genre: Drama, Tradition, 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?

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.

Director's Biography

Suzannah Mirghani is a Communication and Media Studies graduate and an independent filmmaker working on highlighting stories from the Arab region, with a particular focus on Sudan and Qatar. Being of multicultural backgrounds, both Sudanese and Russian, she is interested in stories that examine the interconnectedness of multiple ethnicities and identities, and is especially interested in exploring the wealth of multicultural encounters that occur in a traditionally cosmopolitan place like Qatar. Suzannah is the writer and director of several short films, including 'There Be Dragons' (2017), 'Caravan' (2016), 'Hind's Dream' (2014) and 'Hamour' (2011).

Production

Short Narrative

Fall Grants 2018

Anissa Daoud

Director / Screenwriter / Producer



Lotfi Achour

Producer



Contact

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The Bath

'Le bain' / Tunisia, France, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 25

Genre: Drama, Family

After his wife leaves on a business trip, Imed is left alone with his five-year-old son and must face his deepest fear.



When his wife leaves on a business trip, Imed must take care of his 5-year-old son, Hedi, for the first time on his own. While his wife has always taken care of their child's daily needs, Imed ends up enjoying this privileged time with his son, even after showing a little resistance. However, this common and simple event in a family's life unearths dark memories from Imed's past. Little by little, Imed is paralysed with anguish from the most trivial moments, forcing him to lead an unceasing double struggle—against his resurging fears and dire need to hide his turmoil from everyone and especially young Hedi.

Director's Note

When addressing the issue of paedophilia, stories mainly perceive it in terms of immediate violence exerted on the victim or of the management of the related trauma. Yet paedophilia affects far more than the victim, exerting a more devastating and lasting violence. This film attempts to tell how paedophile acts not only destroy the individual childhood and may degrade his adult life, but even in case of reconstruction, they can tarnish the most innocent and powerful link—parental love. When we considered writing a film dealing with this subject, we thought about the fundamental question: “How can we say the unsayable?” And as it is a film, show the “unshowable”? Faced with this difficulty, we tried to honestly ask ourselves what touches us and bothers us the most. And the answer has emerged—the definitive and radical loss of childhood and any form of recklessness that could be attached to it.

Director's Biography

Anissa Daoud has participated in over 30 projects in both theatre and cinema, in Tunisia, France, Italy, Syria and Palestine. She has been involved in various projects as an actress, author, producer and director. Anissa has won several awards as an actress in Jilani Saadi's 'Tender is the Wolf' (2006), Fares Naanaa's 'Borders of Heaven' (2015), Kaouther Ben Hania's 'Beauty and the Dogs' (2017) and Lotfi Achour's 'Burning Hope' (2017). She has also directed two documentaries, including the feature film 'Our Women in Politics and Society' (2016), and co-directed with Aboozar Amini the short film 'Best Day Ever' (2018), presented at the Directors' Fortnight "Tunisia Factory" at Cannes Film Festival.

Company Profile

The Artistes Producteurs Associés (A.P.A.) have produced two documentaries, four short films, the feature film 'Burning Hope' (2017), and have partnered with Canal +, France 3, and Orange Studio. Two of their latest productions in short films 'Law of the Lamb' and 'All the Rest is the Work of Man' were respectively in official competition at Cannes Film Festival and the Mostra of Venice in 2016. Their films have participated in more than 200 festivals and have been awarded over fifty times. The company is co-managed by author, director and producer Lotfi Achour, and actress, author and producer Anissa Daoud.

Production

Short Narrative

Fall Grants 2018

Khalifa Al-Thani

Director / Screenwriter



Vibhav Gautam,

Mohamed D. Fakhro

Producers



Contact

Vibhav Gautam

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Border

Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 10

Genre: Drama, Immigration

When a middle eastern man wants to cross the border, bypassing the security, this becomes a near impossible journey.



Mohammed, a Middle Eastern man, is desperately trying to get through airport security to his destination for an important job interview. As Mohammed proceeds to collect his boarding ticket, he is staggered by the amount of ignorant questions posed by the Airline representative in Zone One as part of the new rules and regulations. Overwhelmed, he takes a breather and looks around the humid, damp space in Zone Two. The international passersby have been waiting for a long period of time it seems. Getting closer to the security officers, Mohammed sees a Muslim woman being dragged to the Red Zone and another foreigner struggling to get through security. Mohammed's nerves start to kick in, as he's in the final stages of Zone Two. With time running out, he is banished to the Red Zone for no good reason, and with no end in sight. In a single day, Mohammed's experience of discrimination exhibits a small fracture of the raw reality and ignorance happening in the world today.

Director's Note

An estimated 2,000 children were separated from their families over a six-week period. That's just one of many recent events under the "zero-tolerance" Trump Administration. The direction I will be taking on the illegal immigration system will be depicted through the airport security system. The multi-cultural crossroad where everyone checks in, waiting to head to their destinations smoothly. The film will be describing certain global issues around the world today, Syrian refugees who have fought for a home because of civil war, families who were separated because of the blockade, parents torn apart from their children at the US border and the racial profiling that rises throughout.

Director's Biography

Khalifa Al-Thani is an independent filmmaker and visual artist. He graduated from the School of Visual Arts in New York City with a degree in Film and Video. Al-Thani experiments with nationalist documentaries and visual art pieces, most notably *The Fabricator* (2017). He is currently working on his DFI granted short film 'Border' and his feature-length screenplay 'About a Journal'. Al-Thani is part of the Film Training and Development team at the Doha Film Institute.

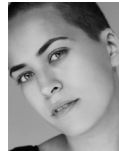
Production

Short Narrative

Spring Grants 2018

Meryam Joobeur

Director / Screenwriter / Producer



Habib Attia

Producer



Contact

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Brotherhood

Tunisia, Canada, Sweden, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 25

Genre: Drama, Social Issues, Youth, Family

Malik, an eighteen-year-old with flaming red hair, returns to his small village in Tunisia after fighting in Syria and must confront a complicated relationship with his father.



Mohamed is a hardened shepherd living in rural Tunisia with his wife and two sons. His life is thrown into turmoil when his oldest son Malik returns home from Syria with a new wife named Reem. Malik's mother and younger brothers are quick to embrace Malik's return, but Mohamed is uncomfortable with his presence and potential radical influence on the family. 'Brotherhood' explores the complexity of familial relationships and the destructive effect of assumptions.

Director's Note

In the winter of 2016, I drove through the north of Tunisia and had a chance encounter with a family of shepherds made up of three sons Malik, Chaqer and Rayaan. I immediately connected to the three redheaded brothers and their extraordinary appearance that broke the stereotype of what Tunisians 'look' like. I felt there was something special about them and a year later I returned with the script of 'Brotherhood' and asked the three brothers to act in the film. Together with the boys and veteran Tunisian actors Mohamed Grayaa and Salha Nasraoui, I perfected the story and realized that beyond the sociopolitical context of the film, it's a story about the difficulty of communication and the destructive consequences of judgments.

Director's Biography

Meryam Joobeur is a Montréal based Tunisian filmmaker and co-founder of the production company 'Instinct Bleu.' Her short films 'Gods, Weeds and Revolutions' (2013) and 'Born in the Maelstrom' (2017) starring Sasha Lane screened in dozens of national and international festivals. Her recent short 'Brotherhood' (2018) recently premiered at TIFF where it won Best Canadian Short. She is currently developing two feature films including 'Motherhood,' the feature adaptation of 'Brotherhood'. She is an alumni of TIFF talent lab, Rawi Screenwriters Lab and Berlinale Talent Lab.

Company Profile

Since 1983, Cinétélefilms has been one of the leading production companies in Tunisia and the Arab World by producing some of the biggest blockbusters in Tunisian and Arab cinema such as 'Man of Ashes', 'Silence of the Palace', and 'Halfaouine'. Habib Attia, its managing director since 2007, produces narrative and documentary films dealing primarily with contemporary socio-cultural issues. His latest ventures as producer include 'We Could Be Heroes' (2018) premiered in HOTDOCS winning the Best International Documentary award, 'Beauty and The Dogs' (2017) that premiered in Cannes Un Certain Regard official selection winning the Best sound creation award, 'Writing on Snow' (2017) opening film in Carthage Film Festival, 'Zaineb Hates the Snow' (2016), which premiered in Locarno and won Golden Tanit in Carthage Film Festival, and 'Challat of Tunis' (2014), which opened the Acid Programme in Cannes Film Festival, won the Best First Film award in FIFF Namur.

Production

Short Narrative
Fall Grants 2018

Rachel Aoun

Director / Screenwriter



Stephanie Paulikevitch

Producer



Contact

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The Bystander

Lebanon, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 15

Genre: Drama, Social Issues

When Roger, a beloved basketball coach, witnesses a horrifically violent incident on his way to work, his whole day and sense of self is shattered.



On a sunny July day in Beirut, Roger, a beloved basketball coach, is on his way to work, proudly carrying a chocolate box announcing the birth of his baby boy. He yet witnesses a horrifically violent aggression, without intervening and frozen on the sidewalk. Roger's descent into shame begins there, as he has to navigate through his students and colleagues' congratulations, offering them chocolates while his guilt continues to sink in. Each encounter brings a new update on the victim's situation, the incident having spread all over the news. When he reaches the basketball court for a training session, Roger is a crushed man that cannot face the looks of the teenagers who idolize him.

Director's Note

Inspired by a real road rage incident, I wrote this script to exorcise and deconstruct my feelings. I could have been passing by, and I would maybe also have done nothing. This film explores the notion of the hero. Could we really be heroes when actions are needed? Would we really act when not behind the safety of our screens? Beirut's streets and Lebanon's valleys are flooded with trash, our political system is collapsing, and our values are long gone, yet very few people react and even less act. We are all prisoners of our projected persona, and my film tries to point out the subtle yet constricting human interactions and our supposed status in society, exploring guilt and self-image.

Director's Biography

Rachel Aoun is a Lebanese cinematographer who has collaborated with many Arab and international filmmakers. As DOP, she lensed three feature films; 'Solitaire' (2016) by Sophie Boutros, 'The Last Friday' by Yahya Al Abdallah (Special Jury Award at Dubai International Film Festival 2012) and 'Yanoosak' (2010) by Elie Khalife. Besides numerous TVCs, web series and theatre plays, her work includes documentaries, short films and essays by, among others: Amal Al Muftah's 'Sh'hab' (2018); Carlos Chahine's 'The Player's Son' (2018) and 'Chekhov in Beirut' (2016); Georges Hachem's 'Messe du Soir' (2009); Gilles Tarazi's 'Tomorrow, 6:30' (2008), Khalil and Joanna Joreige's installation 'On Scams' (2008) and Lamia Joreige's 'And The Living Is Easy' (2015).

Post-Production

Short Narrative

Spring Grants 2018

Nouf Al Sulaiti

Director / Screenwriter



Justin Kramer

Producer



Contact

The Film House

Justin Kramer

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Gubgub

Qatar / Arabic / 2018

Runtime: 10

Genre: Drama, Family, Women's Issues

An adventurous young girl goes crab-hunting with her father and brother. Discouraged when her father undervalues her accomplishments, she sets out to win his approval.



After getting her first catch of the day while crab-hunting with her father and brother, bright-eyed Jawaher shows it to her father. He dismisses her but goes on to praise her brother's catch. Determined to win her father's approval, Jawaher shrugs off his hurtful reaction and sets out to catch ten crabs. On her quest, she finds herself battling for a catch with Nawaf, a boy who shares her goal.

Director's Note

There is a young girl like Jawaher in everyone. Many young girls feel the need to win admiration and affirmation for the things they do. I have seen myself as Jawaher at many moments in my life. I had to remind myself constantly that I am my own power, I drive myself forward, and I should not allow anything to stand in my way. Especially in a society and culture like mine, many young girls who start to feel overshadowed by others begin feeling down. I want to remind young girls – and women in general – that it is we who control these things. We are unstoppable unless we stop ourselves. Jawaher thinks she is longing for her father's admiration; little does she know that she is her own support. I want every girl to feel that she can be strong, even when the world seems to be working against her.

Director's Biography

Nouf Al Sulaiti is a Qatari producer with a passion for storytelling. She has worked on numerous film projects, both fiction and documentary, including AJ Al Thani's 'Black Veil', Yassine Ouahrani's 'Noor' (2017), Zaki Hussain's 'How to Get Over a Heartbreak' (2017), and her own 'Outdated' (2016) and 'Papers' (2016), both of which she also produced. Nouf has received grants to make Zaki Hussain's 'Terima Kasih', and Zahed Bata's 'Burn the Bird', which she is producing, and her own, 'Gubgub'. Nouf is currently producing a feature film called 'Khuzzama'.

Company Profile

The Film House is a Doha-based film, video, photography and multimedia production company. Its talented team of experienced and creative storytellers, documentarians, animators, photographers, and film directors cover all aspects of projects, from idea generation through post-production. Not a traditional production company, The Film House offers flexible production to facilitate a range of requirements. With a wealth of local knowledge and 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 a home for high-calibre international productions that want to come to town and place Qatar in the spotlight.

Production

Short Narrative

Spring Grants 2018

Nicolas Fattouh

Director / Screenwriter



Nermine Haddad,

Fabian Driehorst

Producers



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Nermine Haddad

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How My Grandmother Became a Chair

Lebanon, Germany, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 8

Genre: Animation, Family

A whimsical story of transformation and discovery, as an ageing woman turns into a chair and finds companionship in the most unlikely of places.



The heartless sea is relentlessly approaching poor grandmother's house. By losing her five senses one after the other, she gradually becomes more and more wooden. Until one day, she transforms completely into a chair while waiting patiently for her greedy children to visit her. Rose, her thorny housekeeping beast tries her best to prevent this transformation but fails. In the end, Grandmother discovers the soft human being hidden under the surface of the beast and eventually realises that Rose is the kind of family member she was always waiting for.

Director's Note

My grandmother always lived very near to my house, therefore I never felt the urge to visit her; I thought that she was always going to be there and that I would have plenty of time to visit her later. But one day, she was not there anymore. This broke my heart and made me regret not visiting her more often. It is only by going back to her house and looking at her wooden chair that I discovered that my grandmother never left, but instead she lived through that piece of furniture, continuing to look after and guide us. This film is an expression of my sadness and pain in losing my grandmother; it is also my way of healing by finally living my grief and letting go of it. After all, it is only by losing something or someone dear that we learn to appreciate what we still have.

Director's Biography

Nicolas Fattouh was born in 1994 in Monsef, north Lebanon. In 2012, he began studying animation, before graduating in 2015 from the Academie Libanaise des Beaux Arts, first of his class with his short animation 'Le voleur de casseroles'. The film went on to win the Best Animation award at the festival ZUMEFF in Abu Dhabi, and it was screened at several national and international film festivals. His project 'How My Grandmother Became a Chair' was awarded at the Arab Animation Forum (Stuttgart Festival of Animated Film, 2017), and won the Robert Bosch Stiftung prize in 2018.

Company Profile

The studio Fabian&Fred was founded in 2011 by Fabian Driehorst and Frédéric Schuld in Düsseldorf and Hamburg, to produce author driven documentaries, animation, features and short films. In 2014, Fabian&Fred won the scholarship of the Wim Wenders Foundation for the development of their first animated feature. Their first documentary feature film premiered at Internationale Hofer Filmtage in 2014 and was aired on ARTE. Their first animated short film premiered at Berlinale 2015. Since then, the studio has produced a variety of experimental, documentary, 2D, 3D and mixed-media animation in Germany. Their productions have won several international awards and have been shown in festivals such as Berlin, Cannes, Hong Kong, Sheffield, Tokyo and Toronto.

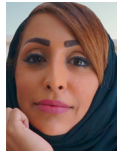
Production

Short Narrative

Spring Grants 2018

Sara Al-Thani

Director / Screenwriter



Franck Merenda

Producer



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Glass Cabin

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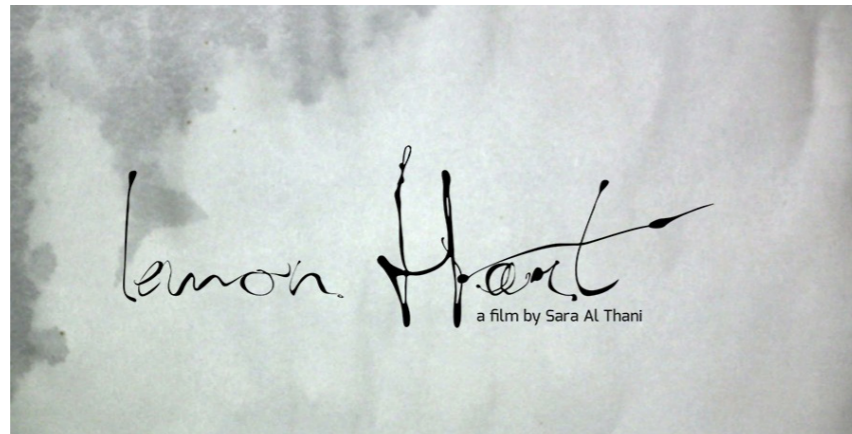
Lemon Hart

Qatar, France / Arabic

Runtime: 12

Genre: Psychological, Arthouse

A troubled young girl retells her tale of courage and the fear she endured at the hands of her stepfather.



In a story of how courage transcends fear, a young American girl living in Le Var, France reflects on the terror she endured at the hands of her stepfather.

Director's Note

'Lemon Hart' is a story about courage that transcends fear. It tells the story of a girl as she reminisces about the stepfather that murdered her mother. The overarching theme is people don't choose their family or their circumstances in life; it's what you make of the hand you are dealt with, that will ultimately set your path in life. Lemon is uncertain of her fate which creates an engaging and curious tension as the audience fear for her future. The dramatic, slightly bitter, tone and melancholic contemplative mood are based on her character having mixed outcomes in her actions. Just when she thinks she has resolved a problem, she is faced with another one directly after, with her perceived wins quickly turning into losses. Her motivation is self-preservation and a life free from the bindings of fear. Lemon's powerlessness at the beginning is shown through particular use of point-of-view shots, voice over, sound and expressionist emotional camera work. Each location in 'Lemon Hart' represents a character, a gateway that reflects her emotional turmoil and opposing truths.

Director's Biography

Sara Al-Thani was born in Qatar but raised in San Francisco, California, and France in a mix of cultures and languages. She graduated in Political Science from the University of San Francisco (USF) and holds a second degree in Fashion Design from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). Along with filmmaking, Al-Thani is also a composer and a painter. 'Lemon Hart' is her first short film as a writer/director.

Company Profile

Glass Cabin Production is a film production company registered in Qatar. The company focuses on independent film projects and international films made by directors with personal artistic vision and the ability to transcend borders with a broad global appeal.

Post-Production

Short Narrative

Fall Grants 2018

Maha Al Jefairi

Director / Screenwriter



Jemina Legaspi

Producer



Contact

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Me, Myself And A.I.

Qatar / Arabic / 2018

Runtime: 11

Genre: Comedy, Identity

After her computer updates automatically, Mashael struggles to finish her delicious burger due to her new A.I. assistant's well-meaning, but never-ending harassment.



Mashael, a 17-year-old girl who sees food as her primary source of happiness, is completely exhausted from her life. While forcing herself to study, she orders a burger for some comfort. As she reaches for her first bite, Mashael's computer software updates and begins to harass her about making better life choices.

Director's Note

I wanted to make this film because I wanted to comment on self-destructive behaviour, but through a comedic lens. The film is about how people can get in the way of themselves and become their own worst enemy. For our protagonist, the A.I. is just another person in her life telling her what to do, and always assuming they know better (even though sometimes they are correct). We're constantly bombarded by everyone in our lives telling us what to do, and for something like A.I. to appear, their behaviour won't change and would encourage rebellion. I think that could ring true to a lot of people who have refused to accept assistance and then regret it when that option is gone.

Director's Biography

Maha Al-Jefairi is a Qatari filmmaker. She holds a Communications degree from Northwestern University in Qatar. Maha hopes to make not only films, but also to create television shows. She is currently in post-production for her first short film, 'Me, Myself, & A.I.', and 'Connect' will be her second film.

Production

Short Narrative

Spring Grants 2018

Muhannad Lamin

Director / Screenwriter / Producer



Marwa Alnaas

Producer

Contact

Khayal Productions

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Prisoner and Jailer

Libya, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 12

Genre: Drama, Politics, History, Based on a True Story

A stirring tragedy based on actual events that asks the question, what happens when the prisoner becomes the jailer?



The story of two contrasting Libyans, one a key official in the former regime, the other one of the most prominent figures of the post-revolutionary period in Libya. Through these two characters, we discover the circumstances surrounding one of the most influential events in modern Libyan history: The Abu Salim Prison massacre in which more than 1,200 political prisoners were killed in the space of just a few hours. The film shifts between past and present through the two protagonists who exchange the role of victim. The majority of the events and dialogue that feature in the film were taken directly from testimonies of former prisoners and wardens.

Director's Note

Like many young revolutionaries, I took to the streets to protest against the Libyan regime, and the Abu Salim massacre was one of the most important events that shaped our ideas on justice. The first protestors of the 2011 uprising were families of the victims, yet the details of the massacre are almost never discussed. Thinking of how the media was portraying the survivors of the massacre as victims in 2011 and how they are now portrayed as perpetrators and vice versa for the regime officials, gave me the idea of the contrast between the character change that happened with these individuals. Because of this, I wanted to explore the concept of victim and culprit through the eyes of these two characters who are connected by a critical event.

Director's Biography

Muhannad Lamin studied directing and scriptwriting at Tripoli's Arts Institute, while working as a creative director at 2Go2 Media and an editor at Huna Production. He has been involved in producing a number of public-awareness campaign projects for clients including the Electoral High Authority, the Ministry of Justice, the Warriors' Affairs Commission, BBC Media Action and several NGOs. He has also been involved in several documentary projects such as 'Poet of the Sea' (2012), 'Between the Ropes' (2013), 'Freedom Fields' (2018), and 'After a Revolution' (2018).

Company Profile

Khayal Productions is a Libyan production company based in Tripoli. The company is focused on creating and developing a network of audio-visual artists to revive the Libyan cinema industry. It was founded by young Libyan filmmakers and based on collaborations between local filmmakers and internationals to provide high-quality production and build capacity and capability in the local art community.

Production

Short Narrative

Spring Grants 2018

Antoine Antabi

Director / Co-screenwriter



Cécile Paysant

Co-screenwriter



Katharina Weser, Raghad Shreet

Producers



Contact

Reynard Films

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Rest in Piece

Syria, Germany, UAE, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 6

Genre: Animation, Drama, War, Fantasy, Exile

Escaping his war-torn home country, Midyan is forced to eat his last and dearest belongings. But what will become of him after this strange supper?



Shelling forces the 40-year-old Midyan to flee his homeland. He takes with him only his dearest belongings; a family photo, a picture drawn by his children, his son's sunglasses and a brick from his recently destroyed house. On an arduous journey through a world that does not welcome him, Midyan is forced to eat the few items he has left. After swallowing each piece, it transforms him and becomes part of him, as they begin to grow out of his back. Slowly Midyan turns into a monster made out of his memories, carrying this heavy weight on his shoulders. When he arrives in a refugee camp, he can see that he is not the only one transformed from the journey and realises that all men are equal, even though we are very different.

Director's Note

My film is about the struggle to survive in displacement and the way in which outside conditions force you to change your entire being. As a refugee from Syria myself, and as someone who has spent a great deal with those who are in an even worse situation than my own, I believe it is extremely important to represent this sense of loss. I intend to create this film in the name of all of those who have lost their homes, their families, their possessions. For those who are struggling to retain a sense of themselves, seeking hope in every place, and building their own home inside themselves.

Director's Biography

Antoine Antabi was born in Syria in 1983 and graduated from the faculty of Fine Art and Visual Communications at Damascus University. He worked as a graphic designer and photographer before moving to Lebanon in 2014 to work as a Media Manager with a Syrian refugee NGO. He now lives in Dubai where he works in filmmaking, photography and graphic design.

Company Profile

Reynard is an anthropomorphic red fox and trickster figure and is the central character in a literary cycle of allegorical French, Dutch, English, and German fables. Reynard Films specialises in short and feature films, and web-series. With the fox in their logo, Reynard Films is particularly interested in telling stories from fairy tales that dive deep into a surreal, magical world that can only exist in films.

Production

Short Narrative

Spring Grants 2018

Abdulaziz Mohammed Khashabi

Director / Screenwriter / Producer



The Unlucky Hamster

Qatar / Arabic, English

Runtime: 6

Genre: Animation

Fluffy is a cute hamster in a pet shop who dreams of a new home. But when someone finally decides to buy him, his dream quickly turns into a nightmare.



The story of a hamster who waited patiently in a pet shop, hoping someday, someone will bring him home with them. Many people pass by his small tank without noticing him before someone finally walks up to him and decides to buy him. The hamster becomes very excited to be finally bought, but unfortunately, he will not be happy for long.

Director's Note

As I grew up watching Disney and Pixar films, I was fascinated with their wonderful colours and appealing characters. Moreover, I was inspired by the creativity of delivering an idea or a lesson through comedic animated storytelling. A style that brings laughter and entertainment to viewers of all ages, while at the same time, an experience which they can learn from. In 'The Unlucky Hamster', my goal is to show that no matter what you do, you won't escape from what you are destined for.

Director's Biography

Abdulaziz Mohammed Khashabi

is a Qatari filmmaker and engineer, who worked for seven years as a maintenance planning engineer. He graduated from the University of Portsmouth in the UK and holds a bachelor's degree in Computer Engineering. He has a passion for animation films and has written scripts, as well as designed characters and storyboards. His scriptwriting work includes a feature film, a couple of short films, and a traditional Qatari series consisting of 15 episodes.

Contact

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Production

Short Narrative

Spring Grants 2018

Zahed Bata

Director / Screenwriter



Nouf Al Sulaiti, Mayar Hamdan

Producers



Contact

Nouf Al Sulaiti

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The Wake

Jordan, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 13

Genre: Drama, Dark Comedy

Grief-stricken Samaa and her son Mohye set out in the middle of the night to bury her beloved parrot, and inadvertently awaken buried feelings from a previous tragedy.



In the midst of night, Samaa, an old woman and her pubescent son Sari are at odds on the appropriate burial for 'The White Box'. While Samaa's reaction to the disposal is very sentimental, Sari is pragmatic and dismissive of his mother's emotions. After their attempts to dig a burial hole fail and with Sari now fast asleep, Samaa comes to the difficult decision that the only way for her to achieve peace of mind is to set the box on fire. A police patrol stops the suspicious duo from starting the fire, but Samaa and Sari ultimately succeed in putting the box and what it carries behind them as they finally decide to come together.

Director's Note

'The Wake' is based on a true personal story but explores the universal themes of family dynamics, grief and acceptance. The main characters must go on both an external and an interpersonal journey of coming to terms with a past death of a family member manifested in the burial of a mysterious white box. The two protagonists lie on opposite ends of a spectrum, with the struggle between their points of view towards this death becoming the vehicle for a conversation that has not been had for years, and an attempt at recuperating their relationship. This film is a means of openly discussing the taboos of passed family members. It serves as a way to overcome such an obstacle and a way to discover my own voice as a storyteller.

Director's Biography

Zahed Bata is a Qatar-based Palestinian filmmaker. He has worked on a variety of projects including documentaries, narrative and experimental films such as 'Good as New', 'Upon the Death of a Nation', 'The Dog's Children', 'Shishbarak' and advertisements for clients such as Al Jazeera, and Ooredoo. He has gained experience as a Director of Photography and Gaffer on over 27 projects in total, 13 of which were short films.

Production

Short Experimental or Essay
Spring Grants 2018

Valentin Noujaïm

Director / Screenwriter



Orane Gibier, Jowe Harfouche

Producers



Contact

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The Blue Star

Lebanon, France, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 25

Genre: Experimental

A father only speaks Arabic, his wife only French, while their son speaks both. A mysterious visit by The Unknown on one night, will change the way they communicate forever.



A husband and wife are separated only by language; he speaks Arabic while she speaks French and their beloved son speaks both. Although unable to communicate verbally, the couple is very much in love with body language playing a large part in their relationship. One night a mysterious spot appears in the sky, “The Unknown”, and begins speaking to them in their native languages. The husband decides to build a machine to communicate with the strange visitor further, but will the Unknown ever answer him?

Director's Note

Language is a world in and of itself. A world, but which one? For whom? Could it be an “extra”-terrestrial one? ‘1001 Stars’ is an experimental film that uses archive footage and a collage of mixed media to question the very essence of linguistics. The film is divided into three chapters with three characters; the Man, the Woman and the Son, each interrogating a different language and their respective relationship to the world using Arabic, French, and their hybrid product. Language is a myth, and the film renders it into a science-fiction. ‘1001 Stars’ is a poem. Each character utters a “Je” in French and an “Ana” in Arabic, each of them articulating feelings, fears, and their relationship to the Unknown, but also to the each other. The film envisions itself as a mystery, a mix of words and images, an unidentified flying object.

Director's Biography

Valentin Noujaïm was born in France in 1991, to parents from Egypt and Lebanon. After studying Political Sciences, Valentin worked as assistant director and co-writer for the documentary ‘THF Central Airport’ by Karim Ainouz. In 2015, he directed an 8mm short film which was selected by several experimental film festivals (Boddinale, Berlin Short Film Festival). In 2016, Valentin entered La Fémis in the script department. He is currently working on different script writing projects for both short and feature-length films, and on various film formats such as 8mm and DV.

Production

Short Experimental or Essay
Fall Grants 2018

Panos Aprahamian
Director / Producer



Moritz Maiworm
Producer



Contact

Cosmo Pictures Limited
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This Haunting Memory That Is Not My Own

Lebanon, Germany, Qatar / Armenian

Runtime: 20

Genre: Experimental, Exile, Social Issues

A set of journeys through time and territory exploring the various ways in which humans acquire land and resources, and the collateral damage these methods produce.



A family finds itself violently ripped apart from their native home and thrown into the sea, in search of a better future. A forest is raised to the ground to make way for industrialised agriculture. Images of a barren desert arrive from a lost future. A city seen from the sky expands, absorbing everything in its path. An unnamed narrator reads a letter addressed to an unborn descendant. Decaying melodies of Levantine music echo and self-destruct within a thick layer of ambient drone. As all these voices, sounds and images merge, they form a narrative that tells a universal story of land grab and land loss, exile, genocide and environmental destruction. 'This Haunting Memory That Is Not My Own' is an aural and visual essay that overlays several journeys, a sensory one that attempts to evoke a perceived time, place or geography through the mapping of territories, and a narrative one materialized as a speculative epistolary correspondence between the present and the future that continuously summons the past.

Director's Note

'This Haunting Memory That Is Not My Own' is an attempt to retrace a family's journey through landscapes stained by their past and consumed by their future. It is a quest for traces, looking back at spectres of Levantine history, and forward to the coming ecological collapse. It is a documentary essay that revisits the road film and climate-fiction in the hopes of telling a universal story. "The Armenians are simply an opportunity that allows me to talk about the whole world" claimed filmmaker Artavazd Peleshyan. This in many ways is what I am trying to achieve. I intend to create a film where I conjure different media as a way to play with temporality, and flatten the space where the actual and the virtual, the human and the nonhuman, the past, the present and the future all coalesce.

Director's Biography

Panos Aprahamian is a Beirut-based filmmaker and artist who works across different media to explore the various ways in which the past and the future haunt the present. Aprahamian holds an MA in Documentary Film from University of the Arts London (2015), where he studied as a Caspian Arts fellow, and a BFA in Moving Image from the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts (2008). He has participated in different film festivals and residencies around the world, including Ashkal Alwan's Home Workspace Program (2017/18).

Company Profile

Cosmo Pictures was founded in London in 2017, by Cosima Barzini and Moritz Maiworm. Having met at the London College of Communication in a Master's programme in Documentary Film, they collaborated on a few short film projects. After graduation, Cosima worked as a camera assistant and cinematographer on numerous projects for Sky Arts, as well as many commercials, music videos and as a camera trainee. Moritz worked at one of the largest post-production houses in the country, The Farm Group, gaining insight into the industry and professional production workflow on some of the biggest television programmes in the UK, including 'The X Factor', '24 Hours in A&E' and '999 What's Your Emergency'. The company was initially founded to combine their experience, and develop and produce stories they found lacking in the media landscape. For their first project, a documentary on India's Women's Ice Hockey Team, they were awarded support from One World Media and Women's Voices Now. Filmed in different regions of India and Malaysia, 'High Passes' is the company's first short film and due to premiere in early 2019.

TV Series

The Source

TCA186: The Tarmac Year

Web Series

The Closet Sessions

Zyara

Development

TV Series

Fall Grants 2018

Erige Sehiri

Director / Screenwriter



Palmyre Badinier

Producer



Cecile Allegra

Co-screenwriter

Contact

Akka Films

Palmyre Badinier

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The Source

Tunisia, Switzerland, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 12 x 26'

Genre: Documentary, 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. Five friends listen 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, 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 friends—Raoua the intellectual, Fadi the strategist, Noor the audacious, and Sami the resourceful. Following Hicham’s footsteps, they leave Thala to venture further and further from home. They discover the world of cyber activists, and their path crosses 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 joins the thousands of protesters on Habib Bourguiba Avenue in Tunis, on January 13th, 2011.

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.

Director's Biography

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 ICJ, and head of Henia Production, through which she produces films.

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.

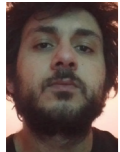
Development

TV Series

Fall Grants 2018

Mohamed Berro

Director / Producer



Fuad Halwani

Screenwriter / Producer



Contact

Cinemoz

Mohamed Berro

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TCA186: The Tarmac Year

Lebanon, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 16 x 26'

Genre: War, History

Set in an alternate timeline of the 1980s, two Lebanese cousins hijack a plane and land it in Strovia, a fictional Arab-Soviet satellite island state in the Mediterranean. Negotiations get tangled with Cold War politics, and the hijackers and passengers alike find themselves attempting to survive the longest hijacking in history.



Set in a reimagined timeline of the 1980s, Ahmad and Mourad, two Lebanese cousins, hijack a plane en route from Athens to Beirut. When things do not turn out as expected, they decide to land it in Strovia, a fictional Arab-Soviet satellite island state off the coast of Lebanon. Founded in the 1960s as a reaction to then-US President Kennedy's failure to keep his promises during the Cuban Missile Crisis, Strovia harbours all Eastern block-leaning groups and individuals in the region, promising a prosperous utopic communist way of life. As the hijack situation gets pulled into the escalating Cold War between the USSR and the USA, negotiations enter into limbo. Passengers and hijackers alike have to learn to coexist in order to survive the longest plane hijack in history. As time passes, Ahmad and Mourad's visions of the hijack diverge, and a slowly simmering mini cold war starts manifesting on board the TCA186.

Director's Note

A rundown of contemporary pop-culture productions reveals a dominant wave of revivalism(s) and reboots saturated with nostalgic aesthetics. From the title screen of 'Stranger Things' to the 1985 setting of 'Glow', the eighties have become a staple in said productions. What does producing a "historical" show entail while we're in this current production trend? From this questioning comes the desire to set the show in a fictionalised version of the mid-80s cold war era. Effectively, the show aims to deconstruct the 80's timeline by reimagining its events and trying to frame present-day political, social and representational issues in the past. 'TCA 186' carries on the tradition of shows such as 'Seinfeld', 'It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia', 'Horace', and 'Pete' in breaking established conventions in sitcoms. 'Seinfeld' famously describes itself in an episode as a "show about nothing". The "nothingness" in 'TCA' manifests in situational comedy that follows the mundane daily lives of hijackers and hostages alike.

Director's Biography

Born in 1989, **Mohamed Berro** is a Lebanese artist-filmmaker working and residing around Beirut. He graduated with a BA in filmmaking in 2014 and was part of Ashkal Alwan's HWP post-graduate program in 2015. His work has been shown in venues such as Beirut Art Center, the 20MinMax International Short Film Festival, Gothenburg Independent Film Festival, Longue Vue Sur Les Courts Canada, Lebanese Film Festival and VideoEx 2016, amongst others.

Company Profile

Cinemoz is the fastest growing video on demand service for and from the Arab World. Over six million and growing monthly captive viewers now enjoy Cinemoz to watch and discover the largest library of Arabic, Hollywood and Bollywood films, anytime, for free. As of 2017, Cinemoz proudly launched its first Original Series slate, aimed at disrupting the landscape of premium Arabic genre entertainment.

Production

Web Series

Fall Grants 2018

Ahmad Satti Ibrahim

Director



Nasser Kalaji

Producer

Contact

Immortal Entertainment

Ahmad Satti Ibrahim

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The Closet Sessions

Jordan, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 10 x 10'

Genre: Music, Culture

'The Closet Sessions' is a music web series set in a walk-in closet that serves as a platform for alternative artists to showcase their talent.



'The Closet Sessions' was born when hip-hop artist and director Ahmad "Satti" Ibrahim used to record in his closet in search of the right acoustics for his songs, at the beginning of his career. The programme is a bi-monthly web series with a high-production value, and a DIY feel where local, regional and international artists come and experiment with genres in a walk-in closet. Music is a powerful language, from indie ballads to electronic sets, fusing thoughts about the world around us that express the hopes and dreams for the future. In every session, a selected solo artist or band sings an original song in an arrangement especially made for 'The Closet Sessions' as well as a cover song. This show is the first of its kind in the Middle East and the time is now to uplift the musical scene and contribute to the universal dialogue of cultural production.

Director's Note

Creating 'The Closet Sessions' has given me the opportunity to achieve my dream of combining both of my passions into one world. I love to direct and would love to make a feature film one day, but first I want to establish myself as a music video director in the region. The moment I made the decision to fulfil my dreams as a musician and filmmaker combined, I was aware of the constant growth involved as an artist. I knew at that moment that I am a man on a mission to create something unique for my community, my country, my region and the world at large. This is what I am working on with 'The Closet Sessions'—to give a voice to the unheard musical talents of the region, to empower and shed light upon artists that people from the Arab world might never have known existed. My desire is to create a cultural dialogue about music and to showcase the best of the region in a creative and innovate way. This is only the beginning. Where is this going? I have already planned the second, third and fourth seasons. This platform must grow organically so it can offer a comfortable space for people to share their art intimately and passionately. I believe in the future of what 'The Closet Sessions' has to offer. The Middle East has never seen such a platform created to showcase the best of the musical talents that the region can offer across the board; whether it be alternative, successful or underground artists.

Director's Biography

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.

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 webseries, '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.

Production

Web Series

Fall Grants 2018

Muriel Aboulrouss

Director



Denise Jabbour

Producer



Contact

Home of Cine-Jam

Denise Jabbour

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Zyara

Lebanon, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 10 x 15'

Genre: Social Issues, Identity

'Zyara' offers insight into the personal testimonies of individuals who have experienced and overcome a wide range of social challenges through courage, perseverance and resilience.



'Zyara' presents an innovative and deeply personal approach to storytelling. It offers an insight into the testimonies of individuals who have experienced and overcome a wide range of social challenges. The programme has a unique role to play in promoting social cohesion, underlining the qualities which people have in common, rather than those which set them apart. The aim of this documentary series is to promote oneness, tolerance and acceptance by visiting people, meeting them in their personal environment, talking to them heart to heart, listening to their most cherished stories, the memories that marked them the most, feeling their deepest emotions, sharing their dreams and their vision of life. Although each one of us is different, although each one is unique, our stories, feelings and emotions are similar, and they make us one in the end.

Director's Note

I was born in a country constantly at war, the only way for me to survive was through dreams. Dreams I believed in so firmly that they become my reality and so life became a beautiful zyara (visit). 'Zyara' is a web series that aims to paint cinematic, poetic portraits of people, engraving a part of their soul, some of their stories, and most of all their emotions. 'Zyara' is an award-winning documentary web series, it started in Lebanon with the hope to create a ripple of love in the world.

Director's Biography

Muriel Aboulrouss is a multiple award-winning cinematographer, considered to be the first camerawoman in the Arab world. Her cinematography includes films, such as Hady Zaccak's 'Mercedes' (2012) and 'Ya Omri' (2016), and fiction films such as Michel Kammoun's 'Falafel' (2006) and George Hashem's 'Stray Bullet' (2010). As a teacher and lecturer, she created and led Cine-Jam Film Lab since 2012. In 2014, she debuted as a director with the documentary series 'Zyara', produced by Home of Cine-Jam, which she set up together with Denise Jabbour. 'Zyara' won over 40 international awards so far and a new season will be produced every year.

Company Profile

Home of Cine-Jam is a humanitarian arts association that aims to produce stories of resilience and positivity, and strives to always portray authentic emotions with the purpose of helping others heal and develop empathy toward others. Home of Cine-Jam's goal is to help our society through educational, emotional and social films. They host filmmaking workshops to support filmmakers in their search for their stories, to help and support them in being the authentic artists they can be. Home of Cine-Jam is a home for all those who have the courage to inspire and the will to help others benefit from their own experiences. In a world divided by race, hatred, religion and so forth, they endeavour to shape public opinion in the world, by highlighting the challenges faced by marginalised or vulnerable groups and presenting positive solutions.

A full list of projects funded by the Doha Film Institute is available at
www.dohafilminstitute.com/financing/projects/grants

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