
Grants Programme 2015

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The Doha Film Institute Grants Programme embodies our core mandate to support emerging filmmakers and to make a positive contribution to the development of the regional film industry.

Since the inception of the programme, we have supported more than 255 films, and with each funding cycle we continue to seek out projects with a strong directorial vision that are challenging, creative and thought-provoking. Our new round of grantees is no exception. I am delighted to welcome this outstanding crop of projects to our growing community of grantee alumni.

As a result of the two deliberation sessions conducted in 2015, we have funded 54 projects from 23 countries - 51 by first- and second-time filmmakers alongside 3 by established filmmakers from the MENA region.

I am delighted to welcome five outstanding projects by filmmakers in our home country of Qatar. We have awarded grants to filmmakers from across the Arab region and for the first time this year we also support projects from Chile, Peru, Singapore, Spain and Slovenia, highlighting the diversity of our support and our commitment to building an international community of filmmakers.

This year marks the 10th and 11th sessions of the Grants Programme. It is very encouraging at this stage of our initiative to welcome several of our grantee alumni who are returning with new projects. Their return demonstrates the development in their own creative journeys and just how meaningful this programme is for providing an infrastructure of support for emerging talent.

This year also saw an expansion of the grant criteria to include established filmmakers from the MENA region whose films are in post-production, and I am very pleased to welcome respected Arab filmmakers Merzak Allouache, Mai Masri and Hussein Hassan to this year's group of recipients.

Our commitment to our grantees extends further than a one-time grant - through Qumra, our new development platform, as well as other year-round support mechanisms, we support filmmakers for the life-cycle of their projects and strive to connect them with the creative and practical support they require to propel their work to the next stage.

It is a privilege to contribute to bringing these compelling stories to the screen and I am honoured to welcome our newest grant recipients.

- Fatma Al Remaihi
CEO, Doha Film Institute

Doha Film Institute
Grants Team

Hanaa Issa, Director of Strategy & Development

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Vanessa Paradis, Grants Assistant

Wesam Said, Grants Assistant

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Production Grant
Feature Narrative
Spring 2015

Oualid Mouaness

Director / Screenwriter / Producer



Georges Schoucair

Producer



1982

Lebanon, Qatar / Arabic / 2015

Runtime: 100 min

Genre: Animation, Drama,

Interests: Children, Coming of age, History, Politics, War

When 11-year-old Wissam decides to tell a classmate that he loves her, his will is challenged, his courage falters and an impending war threatens to separate them permanently.



With the academic year about to end at a school tucked safely in the mountains of Lebanon, 11-year-old Wissam decides to tell his classmate, Joanna, that he loves her, but his various attempts fail due to faltering courage. One day, studies are interrupted when an air strike hits Beirut and shatters the school's calm. The students are sent home and Wissam realises no one knows what tomorrow will bring and decides it's now or never. In spite of the escalating chaos, he strives to overcome all obstacles in his path to reach Joanna. A story of first love set against the backdrop of the 1982 blitz of Beirut, on a day these two youngsters will never forget.

Contact

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Director's Note

I wrote '1982' with absolute disdain for war. I chose to tell its story through the eyes of an 11-year-old boy as he experiences love – and a dramatic separation from it. The story takes place at a time of profound change. While it is a seemingly simple story about the tender experience of first love and the notion that love trumps war, it is grounded in a specific moment – one that irrevocably changed life in Lebanon and that represents a turning point in Middle Eastern and international politics. With '1982', I am telling everyone's story. It is about a love we have all felt. It is about the fact that no matter where we are in the world, when we are 11, nothing matters except the girl or boy we desire – an age when the world can be whatever we imagine it to be. It is time this story was told, in its simplicity and in its loudness.

Director's Biography

Oualid Mouaness is an independent writer, director and producer who works in the United States, Europe and the Middle East. After receiving his MFA in Film Writing and Directing, he produced Mari Kornhauser's 'Kitchen Privileges' (2000). In 2005, he took on the documentary 'Rize' (2005) directed by David LaChapelle, followed by Adria Petty's 'Paris Not France' (2008). His outfit Tricycle Logic produced Michael Jackson's posthumous live performance of 'Slave to the Rhythm' (2014), Annie Lennox's 'Nostalgia' (2015) for PBS, and the documentary 'I Am Thalente' (2015). He has directed several short films including 'Saint in the Sun' (2002) and 'The Rifle, the Jackal, the Wolf and the Boy' (2015). '1982' is his first feature as director.

Company Profile

Tricycle (Lebanon), a recently formed production entity, is a subsidiary of Tricycle Logic (US), which has been in operation since 2000. Oualid Mouaness, the principal of Tricycle, has a track record of producing award-winning, socially conscious films, as well as high-profile commercials, music videos and live events. Tricycle's main objective in establishing a presence in the Middle East is to embark on facilitating Levant-centric projects, with the belief that the best way to effect positive change is through storytelling and the arts – most effectively through film. With its strong network and deep-rooted connections providing access to entities in the United States, Tricycle aims to offer a bridge for Middle Eastern films to tap the North American market and its audience. Tricycle's most recent passion project is a co-production with South Africa: the life-affirming skateboarding documentary 'I Am Thalente' (2015).

Post-Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Spring 2015

Mai Masri

Director / Screenwriter



Sabine Sidawi

Producer



3000 Nights

'3000 Layla' / Palestine, France, Jordan, Lebanon, UAE, Qatar / Arabic / 2015

Runtime: 110 min

Genre: Drama,

Interests: Based on a True Story, Psychology, Social Issues, Women's Issues

A recently wed Palestinian schoolteacher gives birth in an Israeli prison, where she will fight to protect her son, survive and maintain hope.



Layal, a young, newlywed Palestinian schoolteacher, is arrested on false accusations and sentenced to eight years in prison. She is transferred to an Israeli high-security women's prison, where she encounters a terrifying world in which Palestinian political prisoners are incarcerated with Israeli criminals. When Layal discovers she is pregnant, the prison director pressures her to abort the baby and spy on the Palestinian inmates. Resilient however, and still in chains, Layal gives birth to a baby boy. Through her struggle to raise her son behind bars and her relationship with the other prisoners, she manages to find a sense of hope and meaning to her life. When prison conditions deteriorate and the Palestinian women decide to strike, the prison director warns Layal against joining in and threatens to take her son away. In a moment of truth, Layal is forced to make a choice that will change her life forever.

Contact

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Director's Note

'3000 Nights' is a film about women coming together and finding their strength through resilience and resistance, inspired by true stories of children born in prisons and young women coming of age behind bars. It is first a human story of a young mother who, through her struggle to raise her child and her relationship with the women prisoners around her, finds the space to reflect and mature. The film explores the meaning of motherhood, love and betrayal, focusing on the imagination, creativity and solidarity of women prisoners that empowers them to survive and endure. Prison is a metaphor for the condition of the Palestinian people – and Palestinian women in particular. I am drawn to this story because it allows me to explore the complex relationships that take place within the intimacy of a confined, hidden space of a women's world, and to go beyond the relationship of conflict and into the realm of the unexpected bonds that can arise among captive women at war.

Director's Biography

Mai Masri is a Palestinian filmmaker. She studied Film at San Francisco State University and has directed several award-winning films that have been screened worldwide, and have received more than 60 international awards, including a Trailblazer Award at MIPDoc in Cannes and an Asia Pacific Screen Award. Masri's filmography includes 'Children of Fire' (1990), 'A Woman of Her Time' (1995), 'Children of Shatila' (1998), 'Frontiers of Dreams and Fears' (2001), 'Beirut Diaries' (2006) and '33 Days' (2007). With her husband Jean Chamoun, Masri co-directed and produced 'Under the Rubble' (1983), 'Wildflowers' (1986), 'War Generation – Beirut' (1989) and 'Suspended Dreams' (1992). '3000 Nights' is Masri's first feature-length film. It has won the WIFTS Award and the Audience Award at the Valladolid Film Festival.

Company Profile

Created in 2007 and managed by Sabine Sidawi, Beirut-based **Orjouane Productions** specialises in producing feature-length fiction and documentary films. The Orjouane team is composed of three dynamic women – Sidawi, Jinane Dagher and Renata Rahme. The company seeks regional, European and international funding for the projects it produces, and manages the execution of films from pre-production to shooting in Lebanon and the Middle East. Orjouane has produced, co-produced and line produced more than 25 films, both fiction and documentary, which have been screened and given awards at international festivals, and sold around the world. Among them are Eric Baudelaire's 'The Ugly One' (2013), Cherien Dabis's 'May in the Summer' (2013), Rania and Raed Rafei's '74: The Reconstitution of a Struggle' (2012), Danielle Arbid's 'Beirut Hotel' (2012), Olivier Assayas's 'Carlos' (2010), Maher Abi Samra's 'We Were Communists' (2009) and Dima El-Horr's 'Everyday Is a Holiday' (2009).

Production Grant
Feature Narrative
Spring 2015

Firas Khoury
Director / Screenwriter



Janja Kralj
Producer



Alam, The Flag

'Alam' / Palestine, France, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 90 min

Genre: Drama

Interests: Coming of age, History, Social Issues, Youth

Tamer, a young Palestinian student, takes part in the mysterious "Operation: Flag" mission on the eve of Israel's Independence Day celebrations - a day of mourning for Palestinians.



Palestinian high-school student Tamer doesn't meddle in politics; at the same time, the memory of his uncle, an activist physically broken by imprisonment, weighs heavily on his mind. He is attracted to a new classmate, the beautiful, spontaneous and politically engaged Maysaa', the instant she appears; to impress her, Tamer drags along his buddies into Maysaa's "Operation: Flag". This act of resistance intends to replace the school's Israeli flag with the Palestinian flag on Israeli Independence Day - a day of mourning for Palestinians when they commemorate the Nakba, or "catastrophe". Under Maysaa's influence, Tamer's political consciousness is sparked and he decides to participate in his first-ever demonstration.

Contact

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Director's Note

In this film I wish to give prominence to those Palestinian youths who, despite the odds, have willingly chosen to turn their peaceful struggle against injustice into their primary vocation. High-school students with courageous souls have become a great source of inspiration to me since I began following and observing them in recent years. The voice of this perceptive, liberal and proud Palestinian generation that demonstrates peacefully in creative ways has rarely been transmitted in the often-biased world media - even the absurdity of the image of military and police forces violently subduing a peaceful high-school demonstrator has been silenced.

Director's Biography

Firas Khoury is Palestinian director. He graduated from the University of Tel Aviv with a Master's degree in Film. Khoury has several short films to his credit; among them are the award-winning documentaries 'Seven Days in Deir Bulus' (2007) and 'Yellow Mums' (2010). Alongside his directorial activity, Khoury is committed to disseminating Palestinian films and training young people. He is a founding member of Group Falastinema, which develops film workshops and presents screenings throughout Palestine.

Company Profile

KinoElektron is a production company based in Paris. Founded by Janja Kralj, KinoElektron is committed to an international cinema and works with established directors and emerging talents, maintaining a strong collaboration between producers and directors. The company has produced or co-produced features including Maya Kenig's 'Off White Lies' (2012) and Eva Pervolovici's 'Marussia' (2013), both of which were selected for the Berlin International Film Festival. KinoElektron's most recent production, Croatian director Ognjen Sviličić's 'These Are the Rules' (2014), was screened in the Orizzonti section of the Venice International Film Festival, where it won the award for Best Actor. KinoElektron also co-produced Marco van Geffen's 'In Your Name' (2014) and Sharunas Bartas's 'Peace to Us in Our Dreams' (2015), which was selected for the Directors' Fortnight at the Festival de Cannes.

Post-Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Spring 2015

Junfeng Boo

Director / Screenwriter



Raymond Phathanavirangoon

Producer



Apprentice

Singapore, Germany, France, Hong Kong, Qatar / Malay / 2016

Runtime: 120 min

Genre: Drama

Interests: Psychology, Social Issues

Aiman, a corrections officer, is transferred to a high-security prison. There, he befriends Rahim, who, it turns out, is chief executioner. Can Aiman overcome his conscience and become Rahim's apprentice?



Aiman, a 28-year-old Malay correctional officer, lives with his older sister Suhaila in a modest housing estate. When he is transferred to the region's top prison, he soon takes an interest in a 65-year-old sergeant named Rahim, while the older man takes notice of the principled and diligent Aiman. It turns out that the charismatic Rahim is the prison's long-serving chief executioner. As Aiman's friendship with Rahim grows closer, however, his rapport with his sister deteriorates. When Rahim's assistant quits and he asks Aiman to be his apprentice, Suhaila becomes extremely upset, and a past tragedy returns to haunt the present. Will Aiman overcome his conscience to become Rahim's apprentice – and possibly the next executioner?

Contact

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Director's Note

Singapore used to have one of the world's highest rates of executions per capita. Even today, the death penalty is believed to be a strong deterrent to crime. But this film is not about that. While reading up on capital punishment worldwide, I have come to realise that there are characters missing from the narratives that have been generated. We rarely see things from the perspective of those who pull the lever: the executioners. What does it mean to be empowered to kill? How do these people see themselves in moral and ethical terms? Also absent are the voices of the family members of the executed, who very often belong to an impoverished stratum of society. How does the legacy of the death penalty further affect them? 'Apprentice' addresses these perspectives through its conflicted protagonist, whose struggle to reconcile authority with morality is an important and urgent story.

Director's Biography

Boo Junfeng was trained at film schools in Singapore and Spain. His short films 'Katong Fugue' (2007) and 'Homecoming' (2008) were in competition at the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival, while 'The Casuarina Cove' (2009) was selected for the Berlin International Film Festival. He made his feature-length directorial debut in 2010 with 'Sandcastle', which had its premiere at the Critics' Week at the Festival de Cannes. The film was subsequently invited to film festivals in Toronto, Busan and Vancouver, among others. It won several prizes, including the Best Film, Best Director and NETPAC Jury Awards at the Vietnam International Film Festival.

Company Profile

Akanga Film Asia was created in Singapore in 2005 in order to support artistic activities from filmmaking and photography to theatre and the performing arts, and to create a cultural link between Asia and the rest of the world. Titles produced by Akanga include Ho Tzu Nyen's 'Here' (2009), which was selected for the Directors' Fortnight at the Festival de Cannes; Boo Junfeng's 'Sandcastle' (2010), which screened in the Critics' Week at Cannes; and Vladimir Todorović's 'Disappearing Landscape' (2013), which appeared in the International Film Festival Rotterdam.

Peanut Pictures was formed in 2009 with the aim of producing quality films in Singapore. The company has completed one full-length film: Boo Junfeng's 'Sandcastle' (2010). Funded by the Singapore Film Commission and co-produced with Fortissimo Films and Zhao Wei Films, 'Sandcastle' was the first Singaporean film to be selected for the Critics' Week at the Festival de Cannes. 'Apprentice' is the company's second production.

Post-Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2015

Uda Benyamina

Director / Screenwriter



Marc-Benoît Créancier

Producer



Bastard

'Bâtarde' / France, Morocco, Qatar / French / 2016

Runtime: 120 min

Genre: Drama

Interests: Social Issues, Women's Issues, Youth

Fifteen-year-old Dounia lives with her mother in a rough Parisian suburb, where she has been saddled with the nickname "bastard".



In a ghetto where trafficking and religion run side by side, Dounia is eager for power and success. Supported by Maimouna, her best friend, she decides to follow in the footsteps of Rebecca, a respected dealer. But when Dounia meets Djigui, a young sensuous dancer, her daily life is disrupted.

Director's Note

With 'Bastard', I "return" to the inner city to follow a delinquent girl who dreams of a Tony Montana-like destiny - but her emotions recapture her. 'Bastard' is a story of an education - hard, violent, without compromise and yet universal, since everyone has wondered in their own way how much they were willing to sacrifice in order to become an adult.

Director's Biography

Uda Benyamina is a French-Moroccan director, screenwriter and actor. A graduate of the École Régionale d'Acteurs de Cannes, she trained at the Academy of Minsk, the Ontological Theatre and the Actors' Studio. She has performed in short and feature-length films and numerous plays, collaborating with Jean-Pierre Vincent and Youri Pobjrenichko, among others. She has directed nine short films that have been shown in many festivals and broadcast on French television. Among them, 'The Road to Paradise' (2011), was awarded several prizes at festivals and 'My Big Fat Garbage' (2008) was selected for national and international film festivals. Benyamina is a recipient of the Emergence 2 Prize.

Company Profile

Easy Tiger was founded in 2010 by young producers Jessica Rosselet and Marc-Benoît Créancier. The company's work is based on the search for talented authors and directors with varying backgrounds. We are convinced that the strength of producers lies above all in the talent of the filmmakers they can discover and provide with their utmost support. With this in mind, Easy Tiger has resolved focus on producing short films. In our view, the short form remains complex, is the best school for gaining filmmaking experience, and can be a productive springboard for the transition to feature filmmaking.

Contact

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Post-Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2015

Maximiliano Schonfeld

Director / Screenwriter



Bárbara Francisco

Producer



The Black Frost

'La helada negra' / Argentina, Qatar / Spanish / 2015

Runtime: 80 min

Genre: Drama

In a world disconnected from time, descendants of European immigrants cultivate their land and traditions, but the fields of the Lell brothers' farm are devastated by a frost. When a mysterious young woman appears, the frost stops. Hope emerges among the villagers, who begin to worship her like a saint.



The plantations in Entre Ríos are being devastated by a frost. At the Lell brothers' farm, where they live with their nephew Lucas, a young woman appears and the farm starts to recover: the vegetables survive the frost, Lucas's greyhound performs well on the racetrack and fish appear in an abandoned pond. The Lells are in awe, but the young woman makes them restless. Lucas, however, sees something different: she is a saint who has come to save them. Word spreads and soon the villagers come looking for miracles. The young woman has to decide whether to accept her new position within the community, or to continue on her way.

Contact

Pasto

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Director's Note

Entre Ríos, Argentina: some years ago, only a few kilometres from where I was born and raised, Bruno, a nine-year-old boy who was said to have the ability to contact Jesus and the Virgin, appeared. I tried to get close to him, this saint; I went looking for him, asked if I might film him or take pictures, or stand by his side during the day at the country school. He closed his eyes and told me that the Virgin ordered him not to be photographed that day, but perhaps some other day. I went back later, but the Virgin's orders were the same. I left a tip and walked away, banished. There is the beginning of my narrative: a film about belief, faith and the small sufferings that revolve around any passing cult object.

Director's Biography

Maximiliano Schonfeld was born in Entre Ríos, Argentina, in 1982, then moved to Buenos Aires, where he graduated from ENERC. 'Germania' (2012), his first feature-length film, took the Special Jury Prize and the FEISAL Award at BAFICI, and the NDR award for first feature films at the Hamburg Film Festival, and was selected for festivals in Chicago, Gothenburg, Toulouse, Nantes and Rio de Janeiro. He participated in the DOX:LAB programme in Copenhagen, for which he co-directed the medium-length film 'Auster' with Kadri Kõusaar. His current feature-length project, 'The Black Frost' (2016), had its premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival after being named Best Work-in-Progress at the Mar del Plata International Film Festival. Previously, Schonfeld wrote and directed the television series 'Ander Egg' (2011) and 'El Lobo' (2013), and the short films 'Esnorquel' (2005), 'Entreluces' (2007) and 'Invernario' (2011).

Company Profile

Founded by Bárbara Francisco, **Pasto** is an independent creative production company based in Buenos Aires, whose aim is to produce art-house films and reveal new local talent. In 2013, Delfina Montecchia joined the company after studying in Paris and working for the Festival de Cannes. Pasto's filmography includes Daniel Burman's 'El Rey del Once' (2016), Maximiliano Schonfeld's 'La Helada Negra' (2016) and Juan Schnitman's 'El Incendio' (2015), all of which were screened in the Panorama section at the Berlinale; Schonfeld's 'Germania' (2012), which won a Special Jury Award at BAFICI; Santiago Mitre's 'El Estudiante' (2011), which won a Special Jury Award at the Festival del Film Locarno; and María Alché's upcoming project 'La Familia Sumergida' (expected 2017).

Post-Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2015

Ümit Köreken

Director / Screenwriter / Producer



Nursen Çetin Köreken

Screenwriter / Producer



Blue Bicycle

'Mavi Bisiklet' / Turkey, Qatar / Turkish / 2016

Runtime: 92 min

Genre: Drama

Interests: Children

Young Ali saves up all the money he can working at a tyre repair shop to buy a coveted blue bicycle. Meanwhile, at school, his love for his schoolmate Elif leads him to defend her dismissal as school president. A story of childhood love, dreams and resistance.



Twelve-year-old Ali lives with his mother and sister. When not at school, he works at a tyre repair shop, giving his weekly wage to his mother to help cover the family's living expenses, and saving the tips he gets every now and then to buy himself a blue bicycle. When the semester holiday ends and school begins, Ali is very happy that he will see Elif, his platonic love of five years, more often. A very bright student, Elif is the school president. On the first day of school, however, the headmaster appoints another student as interim school president. Ali believes that Elif has been unfairly relieved of her role, so he decides to put all the money he had put aside for the bicycle into a campaign to reinstate her.

Director's Note

'Blue Bicycle' is a story of hope. In order to capture the emotional fluctuations of the children, we aimed to shoot fast-paced scenes using a moveable camera. I think this also helped better capture the way young people perceive life. The technique boosted the film's sense of reality, and emphasised the ironic and playful attitude of children. By moving the camera alongside the characters, we achieved a dynamic structure that is suitable for children's feelings, which we sought to portray above all else. We avoided using dramatic light, choosing softer lighting to establish the balance during transition from open to enclosed spaces. In places where light was too dull, a colour palette and light set-up was established to reflect the changes taking place within the children.

Director's Biography

Ümit Köreken was born in Akşehir in 1978. He graduated from the Business Management Faculty of Anadolu University and studied digital filmmaking in 2011. He works on radio plays, scripts for the stage, stories and screenplays. His plays and stories have been published in a variety of print and online periodicals. 'Blue Bicycle', his debut feature-length film, had its premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2016.

Company Profile

Drama Film Production was founded by Ümit Köreken and Nursen Çetin Köreken in 2013. A creative, young, independent and internationally oriented production company, Drama is based in Istanbul. We seek to make films that show children as individuals of value. If we achieve this we will have fulfilled our part of the job to render the world a more peaceful and inhabitable place.

Berlin-based **Papermoon Films GmbH** is focused on the production of high-quality feature-length films in the art-house and crossover segments for the national and international cinema market. The company's partners are Dorota Budna and Dr. Oliver Thau.

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Production Grant
Feature Narrative
Fall 2015

Hala Elkoussy
Director / Screenwriter



Hossam Elouan
Producer



Cactus Flower

'Zahret Al Sabar' / Egypt, Qatar / Arabic / 2017

Runtime: 100 min
Genre: Drama

A flood leaves three Cairenes homeless. As they journey across the city in search of shelter, they depend upon one another to survive and keep their dreams alive.



Aida, a struggling actress, came to Cairo from the Delta as a university student; like many others, she stayed on in the city. One night, she and her neighbour Samiha, a fading bourgeois beauty, are kicked out on the street. With no money and nowhere to go, the two women, aided by Yassin, a street-savvy youth, embark on a labyrinthine journey across physically and mentally difficult terrain. Amid the funny and at times disastrous turns their journey takes, they move along parallel journeys of self-discovery. An extraordinary friendship grows among the unlikely trio, like a delicate flower blooming from a thorny cactus.

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Director's Note

I am a storyteller. I recount stories of the everyday, the marginal, the banal; of what is omitted, forgotten and lying in the gaps, whether by choice or negligence. This is because I believe small stories connect people on the basis of what is essentially human. 'Cactus Flower' is a small story of what the aftermath is like for three marginalised individuals. They are on the sidelines for no exceptional reasons, rather more because we are experiencing a moment when straying from the societal herd is regarded as betrayal. This is a story of survival through human solidarity; a story of resistance through dreaming.

Director's Biography

Hala Elkoussy was born in Cairo in 1974. She studied at the American University before completing an MA in Image and Communication at Goldsmiths College, University of London, in 2002. In 2006, she completed a two-year residency at the Rijksakademie Van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam. In 2010, Elkoussy was a recipient of the Abraaj Capital Art Prize, the largest monetary prize in the world granted to a visual artist. Elkoussy's work delves into the intimate and overlooked elements of communal living to highlight the dynamics at play within the complex urban structure that is Cairo.

Company Profile

Transit Films is a Cairo-based production company initiated by producer and EAVE 2011 fellow Hossam Elouan. Transit Films produces independent cinema that can reach art-house cinemas around the world.

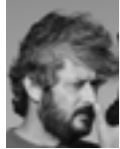
Post-Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2015

Hussein Hassan

Director / Screenwriter



Mehmet Aktaş

Producer / Screenwriter



The Dark Wind

'Reseba' / Iraq, Qatar / Kurdish / 2016

Runtime: 98 min

Genre: Drama

Interests: Politics, Social Issues, War, Women's Issues

Radical Islamists attack a village in Iraq where two young Yazidis are preparing for their marriage. At that moment, their lives become a nightmare.



Reko and Pero, a young Yazidi couple, prepare for family life in their village. While Reko is absent, Islamic State fighters attack, taking the young Yazidi girls and Pero captive. After Reko hears of the attack, he manages to find his parents. After they are safe in a refugee camp, Reko continues searching for Pero. When she arrives at the refugee camp after her ordeal at the hands of ISIS, however, Pero learns that her "new" freedom is equally difficult to surviving captivity. The proud Yazidi culture makes it impossible for Pero and Reko to find a way back to normality. The dark wind continues to menace their future.

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Director's Note

'The Dark Wind' is a project that takes on the responsibility of showing the situation in Kurdistan today. We worked like documentarists, remaining loyal to reality. I was interested in the syndromes of those who have managed to escape from ISIS. Most of our non-professional actors are real war victims. For the most part, we did not provide them with dialogue; rather, they knew intuitively how to express themselves. Pero's story is based on the experience of a Yazidi woman who was liberated from ISIS. I met her in the Syrian town of Til Kocher, and the new nightmare she experienced after her liberation inspired me to make this film.

Director's Biography

Hussein Hassan is a Kurdish director, writer and actor. In 2006, he shot 'Narcissus Blossom', his first feature-length film, which was screened in the Panorama section at the Berlin International Film Festival, where it won the Amnesty International Film Prize, and at the Toronto International Film Festival. In 2009, Hassan finished 'Herman', his second film as writer and director, which had its premiere at the Busan International Film Festival.

Company Profile

mitosfilm is an independent production company based in Berlin and Erbil. We produce fiction and documentary films that are of high artistic quality and that tell authentic, personal stories. Our co-productions aim to address cinema viewers all over the world, and our main goal is to build a cultural and artistic bridge between Kurdish and European cultures, thereby creating new, fruitful relations among them. The results are interesting and meaningful films that bring a special sensibility toward the past, present and future of culture, and that make use of the full potential of those filmmakers who grew up, live and work between these two worlds

Development Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2015

Mohanad Hayal

Director / Screenwriter



Hala Al Salman

Producer



Death Street

'Shariya' Al Maut' / Iraq, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 90 min

Genre: Drama

Tariq, the sniper of Haifa Street in Baghdad, kills Ahmed on the day he intends to propose marriage. While Tariq prevents anyone from approaching the corpse in the street, an intimate and telling drama unfolds.



Haifa Street, one of the most dangerous locations during the civil war in Baghdad, in 2006. Tariq, a 23-year-old sniper, kills 45-year-old Ahmed in front of the home of Su'ad when he comes to ask for her hand in marriage. Tariq prevents anyone from reaching Ahmed's corpse – including Su'ad and her children, Salam and Nadia. As the family faces the arduous task of recovering Ahmed's body, the conflicts among Su'ad, Salam – a devout Muslim who rejects the idea of his mother's remarrying – and Nadia, who is torn between personal ambitions of liberation from male power and her sympathy for her mother. This family drama is set against the question of why Tariq refuses to allow Su'ad to recover the body of her beloved.

Contact

Dream Group

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Director's Note

In 2006, Haifa Street in Baghdad was among the roughest streets of the civil war, which lasted for two years. Haifa Street went from being home to the most important university professors and intellectuals to a street of death, lined with snipers and dead bodies. This film is drawn from a 10-minute experience I had on the street in 2006, when a stranger walking by my side was shot by a sniper and dropped dead. A hail of bullets came upon us from everywhere, and in those strange moments, I don't know how I found refuge in a house nearby. I learned that the people who sheltered me were the family of the man who had just died beside me, and I witnessed them struggling for three hours, trying to collect his body without getting killed. Fear prevented me from helping in any way. We were all helpless, as death was the master of the situation. This film wonders what happened to the family? Who was the sniper? What happened to the dead man in the street?

Director's Biography

Mohanad Hayal was born in Iraq. After graduating from Baghdad University's Faculty of Fine Arts & Cinema and attending several film-directing workshops in the United States, he gained considerable experience working as an assistant to directors Mohamed Al-Daradji and Oday Rasheed. He has made a number of short and documentary films. His 'Happy Birthday' was selected for the 2013 Berlin International Film Festival. He conducts filmmaking workshops and is one of the founders of the Iraqi Independent Film Centre.

Company Profile

Dream Group is a production company whose goal is to seek and explore individual creativity, producing high-impact films with a social conscience. Dream Group has produced numerous short films, documentaries and television programmes and contributed to the establishment the Iraqi Independent Film Centre.

Post-Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Spring 2015

Žiga Virč

Director



Bostjan Virč

Screenwriter / Producer



Houston, We Have a Problem!

Slovenia, Germany, Croatia, Qatar / English, Serbo-Croatian / 2015

Runtime: 85 min

Genre: Docufiction, Drama, Thriller

In March, 1961, Yugoslavia sold its secret space programme to the USA. Two months later, President Kennedy announced that Americans would travel to the Moon. This is an urban myth that millions of people want to believe in.



In 1948, a space programme was established in Yugoslavia, based on the diaries and technical plans of space pioneer Herman Potočnik Noordung. After a 50-year absence, the former space engineer Ivan returns to the former Yugoslavia. Through his position as a senior engineer, he reveals how the Yugoslav space programme was developed and sold to the USA. The story of the film is based on fact and inspired by real-life events.

Contact

Studio Virč

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Director's Note

Presenting history in a fresh way and making it interesting for a wider audience has always been a challenge for me as a filmmaker. In 2010, I was nominated for an Academy Award for my short film 'Trieste Is Ours!' For me, this was a giant leap forward, and I felt ready for a global story for my first feature-length film. I am confident that this urban myth about the Yugoslav space programme that I have chosen to work with has all the attributes I am looking for to implement my vision of a surprising historical story, one that involves European, American and Arab culture and values. Major historical events are interwoven with powerful personal stories, full of emotion with a strong dramatic arc. 'Houston, We Have a Problem!' is a global film with a controversial but relevant concept that maintains a balance between intrigue and deeper messages.

Director's Biography

Film and television director **Žiga Virč** graduated from the Academy of Theatre, Radio and Television in Ljubljana. His short film 'Trieste Is Ours' (2009) was nominated for a Student Academy Award. Virč has directed numerous commercials, documentary films and fiction works, for which he has received numerous awards. He is experienced in cross-platform approach, and some of his works have gone viral both nationally and internationally. His works are notable for their dramatic visual style, which incorporates a detailed approach to a narrative structure and makes it appealing to a broad audience.

Company Profile

Established in 1992, **Studio Virč** is a family-run video, film and television production company. The company is based in Slovenia, but operates throughout Europe and the Middle East on both commercial and artistic projects. For 20 years, Studio Virč primarily produced documentary films for RTV Slovenija, and corporate films and advertisements for international clients. However, after director Žiga Virč was nominated for the Student Academy Award for Best Foreign Short Film in 2010 for 'Trieste Is Ours!', Studio Virč has taken bold steps into the international film arena. Co-produced by Nukleus Film and Sutor Kolonko, 'Houston, We Have a Problem!' is the company's first feature film with a complex financial and production structure. Studio Virč retained the role of main producer and successfully shot the film over 47 days in eight countries on three continents.

Post-Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2015

Milagros Mumenthaler

Director / Screenwriter



Eugenia Mumenthaler

Producer



The Idea of a Lake

'La idea de un lago' / Switzerland, Argentina, Qatar / Spanish / 2016

Runtime: 81 min

Genre: Drama

Interests: Identity

Inés, a photographer, is creating a book of her work. Gradually, the process becomes a personal exploration of her past and the absence of her father, who was disappeared during the military dictatorship in Argentina.



Inés, a 35 year-old photographer, is expecting a child and is in an emotionally vulnerable state. Her imminent motherhood drives her to finish a book of personal photos and poems she has been working on. The process of making this photobook gradually transforms into a very personal and free exploration of her past, her relationship with her mother and her brother, and the absence of her father, who was disappeared during the military dictatorship in Argentina.

Director's Note

I believe time and space are mixed together in a work that is a representation of memories, but that the starting point is always a personal state of mind. In 'The Idea of a Lake', I do not wish to showcase the disappeared; rather, my film speaks of what remains. This is a trigger for different memories of real and imagined events, from various stages in the character's life. There is nothing more real and true than the representation of the intimate, and I defend that notion in all my work. It is the place where thoughts, memories, images and stories become intertwined – and they all have the same origin: a person's state of mind at a particular moment in his or her life.

Director's Biography

Milagros Mumenthaler was born in Argentina in 1977. Soon after, she moved to Switzerland, where she grew up. She has directed five award-winning short films, which have been selected for numerous international film festivals. The script for 'Abrir Puertas y Ventanas' (2011), her first feature-length film, was developed at the Cinéfondation; among many other awards and recognitions, the film received the Golden Leopard for Best Film, the Silver Leopard for Best Actress and the FIPRESCI Award at the Festival del Film Locarno.

Company Profile

Based in Buenos Aires, **Ruda Cine** is an Argentinean production company created in 2006 by Violeta Bava and Rosa Martínez Rivero. With its focus on Argentinean and Latin American feature-length narrative and creative documentary films, Ruda Cine has produced films including Milagros Mumenthaler's 'Abrir Puertas y Ventanas' (2011), which won the Golden Leopard for Best Film, the Silver Leopard for Best Actress and the FIPRESCI Award at the Festival del Film Locarno, as well as numerous other awards and recognitions. Productions also include Martín Reitman's 'Dos disparos' (2014), which premiered at Locarno, and was named Best Argentinian Film by the FIPRESCI jury; and 'Copacabana' (2007), which had its premiere at the International Film Festival Rotterdam, won the FIPRESCI Prize at FICCO in Mexico in 2007, and was screened at numerous festivals.

Alina Film was set up in 2008 in Geneva by Eugenia Mumenthaler and David Epiney. Alina's first feature film, Mumenthaler's 'Abrir Puertas y Ventanas' (2011), won the Golden Leopard for Best Film, the Silver Leopard for Best Actress and the FIPRESCI Prize at the Festival del Film Locarno and the Golden Astor at the Mar del Plata International Film Festival. Floriane Devigne and Fred Florey's documentary 'The Laundry Room', won the Grand Prize in the international competition at Visions du Réel in 2014, and Jean-Gabriel Périot's 'A German Youth' opened the Panorama competition at the 2015 Berlin International Film Festival.

Contact

Alina Film

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Post-Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Spring 2015

Merzak Allouache

Director / Screenwriter



Antonin Dedet

Producer



Madame Courage

Algeria, France, Qatar / Arabic / 2015

Runtime: 89 min

Genre: Drama

Omar, an unstable and lonely teenager, lives in a slum in the suburbs of Mostaganem. He is addicted to a famous psychotropic, nicknamed 'Madame Courage.'



Omar, an unstable and lonely teenager, lives in a slum in the suburbs of the Algerian port city of Mostaganem. He is addicted to a well-known psychotropic – Artane, nicknamed 'Madame Courage', which is very popular among young Algerians for its euphoric effect of invincibility. Omar is a specialist in snatching. This morning, he goes downtown to go about his usual larceny. His first prey is a young girl named Selma, who is walking with her friends, prominently wearing a gold necklace. As he commits his crime, their eyes meet.

Director's Note

With 'Madame Courage', I keep a critical eye on Algerian society. Omar, the main character, symbolises the thousands of marginalised young people living in a dramatic situation in the slums that flourish in Algeria. The scourges of radical Islam and corruption have plagued Algerian society for decades. Nowadays, illegal drugs, prostitution and violence are added to this dreadful list. In Algeria, the risk of an impending social and political blast becomes increasingly palpable. In such a disastrous situation, as much from a political viewpoint as a socio-cultural one, more and more voices speak up to demand a radical change in the system. If 'Madame Courage' is a fiction, it nevertheless takes place in this political context. Nowadays, I believe filmmakers cannot escape the duty of commitment in their films, but that they must avoid turning their creations into mere propaganda.

Director's Biography

Merzak Allouache was born in Bab El Oued, Algeria, in 1944. He studied filmmaking in Algiers at the Institut National du Cinéma and subsequently at IDHEC in Paris. In 1976, he directed his first feature, 'Omar Gatlato'. He lived in France from 1983 until 1988, then returned to Algeria to direct 'Bab El Oued City' in 1993. Since then, he has directed films in both France and Algeria. 'Normal!' (2011) won the prize for Best Arab Narrative Feature at the Doha Tribeca Film Festival (DTFF), while his most recent film, 'The Repentant' (2012), screened in the Directors' Fortnight at the Festival de Cannes and gave him his second award for Best Arab Narrative Feature at DTFF.

Company Profile

Neon Productions is a French production company founded by Antonin Dedet in 2002. Since its creation, Neon has produced or co-produced 18 feature films, more than 45 short films and five documentaries, of which two are feature-length. The company has co-produced feature-length films with more than a dozen countries around the world. Working with directors who have a strong individual viewpoints, the company aims to support ambitious and meaningful art-house cinema. Neon's most recent features include Merzak Allouache's 'Madame Courage', which screened in the Venice International Film Festival in the Orizzonti competition; Tsai Ming-liang's 'Journey to the West', which screened at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2013; Djamila Sahraoui's 'Yema', an Orizzonti competition selection at Venice in 2012; Jean-Jacques Jauffret's 'Après le sud', which screened in the Directors' Fortnight at the Festival de Cannes in 2011; and Maryam Keshavarz's 'Circumstance', which won an Audience Award at Sundance in 2011.

Contact

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Post-Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2015

Oliver Laxe

Director / Screenwriter



Santiago Fillol

Screenwriter



Felipe Lage Coro, Lamia Chraibi, Nadia Turincev

Producer



Contact

Zeitun Films

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The Mimosas

'Las Mimosas' / Spain, Morocco, France / Arabic / 2016

Runtime: 90 min

Genre: Drama, Road Trip

Interests: Identity

In the Atlas Mountains in the past, a caravan searches for the path to take a Sufi master home to die. Among the party is Ahmed, a rascal who eventually becomes inspired to lead the caravan to its destination. Along the way, he is assisted by Shakib, a man sent from contemporary Morocco to guide Ahmed on his journey.



In the High Atlas Mountains at an indeterminate time in the past, a caravan of travellers searches for a pass that will allow them to return an ailing elderly Sufi master to his home to die. Among the party is Ahmed, a rascal and a survivor, who is willing to do whatever it takes to rise up from his miserable condition. Ahmed is particularly inspired by the Sufi master and his wife and, upon the old man's death, he becomes aware of his own innate abilities and takes up the leadership of the caravan. On his journey, he receives the assistance of Shakib, a young man sent on a mission from a special place in contemporary Morocco.

Director's Note

Faith was my main subject in this film. Although it has already been addressed by some of the most important filmmakers ever (Bresson, Tarkovsky and Dreyer, among others), nowadays it does not seem such an easy task. This is in part due to contemporary cynicism and inane esotericism. That is why I use the character of Shakib, who, thanks to his 'insane' status, is entitled to speak openly about faith. For me, he is a kind of Don Quixote or Nassrudin Hodja, lucid in his craziness. 'You have to be faithful', he says to Ahmed when their caravan crosses the gorges of the Atlas mountains looking for a passageway. 'If mules can't make it through the path, then they will fly...'. Do Shakib's words show what the idea of faith is? Perhaps. But I think it is primarily his determination, grace and innocence that really demonstrate the notion.

Director's Biography

Oliver Laxe lives and works in Morocco. His first feature-length film, 'You All Are Captains' (2010) was premiered at the Directors' Fortnight at the Festival de Cannes, where he received the FIPRESCI Prize. He is one of the founders of Zeitun Films. He is currently working on a new feature, 'Yihad'.

Company Profile

Zeitun Films was created in 2009 under the management of Felipe Lage Coro. Since its launch, Zeitun has taken on an important role in the production of art-house films in Spain. The company's first film, Oliver Laxe's multiple-award-winning 'You All Are Captains' (2010) was the first-ever Galician film selected for the Festival de Cannes. It was followed by Eloy Enciso's 'Arraianos' (2012), which screened at the Festival del Film Locarno; Alberto Gracia's 'The Fifth Gospel of Kaspar Hauser' (2013), which received the FIPRESCI Prize at the International Film Festival Rotterdam; Lois Patiño's 'Coast of Death' (2013), which took the Best Emerging Director Award at Locarno; and Enrique Rivero's 'Pozoamargo' (2015). With its commitment to the world of cinema, Zeitun Films seeks to engage the creativity, talent and passion of young filmmakers.

Development Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2015

Haifaa Al Mansour

Director / Screenwriter / Producer



Brad Niemann

Screenwriter



Miss Camel

'Malikat Jamal' / Saudi Arabia, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 90 min

Genre: Animation

A teenage Saudi camel challenges the deep-rooted restrictions of her culture by travelling across the kingdom to compete in the Miss Camel beauty pageant in Doha.



Melwah, a teenage camel, lives under the strict supervision of her father, and hangs out with her best friend, a donkey named Rakhsh. When Melwah's conceited arch-rival Al Rahila mocks Rakhsh while bragging about participating in the upcoming Miss Camel beauty pageant, Melwah stands up for her friend and vows to appear in the competition herself. So begins an adventure in which the young camel must rely on her dignity and determination. In the end, Melwah is triumphant - not as the winner of the beauty pageant, but as the fastest camel in the region.

Director's Note

Celebrating the vibrant tradition of storytelling in the Arabian Peninsula, 'Miss Camel' follows a young camel as she sets out across the desert to compete in a beauty pageant. Over the course of her journey, she finds her own voice and a purpose she could never have imagined before setting out to fight for her dreams. This first animated feature film from Saudi Arabia offers a narrative of empathy, giving local audiences the chance to see their world re-imagined in colours of hope, enchantment and vitality. I hope to open a window onto the beauty and diversity of our land, and to revive the wonders and strength of the artistic traditions of our lost heritage.

Director's Biography

Haifaa Al-Mansour is Saudi Arabia's first female filmmaker and is regarded as one of the most significant figures in cinema in the Kingdom. She studied Literature at the American University in Cairo and completed a Master's degree in Directing and Film Studies at the University of Sydney. The success of her three short films, her award-winning documentary 'Women Without Shadows,' (2005) and her first feature-length film 'Wadjda' (2012) influenced a new wave of Saudi filmmakers and made the issue of opening cinemas in the Kingdom a front-page discussion. Through her films and her work in television and print media, Al-Mansour is well known for penetrating the wall of silence surrounding the lives of Saudi women.

Company Profile

Razor Film was founded in 2002 by Gerhard Meixner and Roman Paul to produce national and international feature films, from art-house to crossover. The company focuses on new talent and high-quality work. To date, Razor's productions have won two Golden Globes, were twice nominated for Academy Awards, and have had their premieres and won award at major film festivals worldwide.

Contact

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Development Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2015

Fyzal Boulifa

Director / Screenwriter



Louise Bellicaud

Producer



Pagan Magic

'Magie païenne' / France, Morocco, Qatar / Arabic, French

Runtime: 100 min

Genre: Drama

Interests: Coming of age, Social Issues, Women's Issues, Youth

A young, poor and uneducated girl works as a maid for a middle-class family in contemporary Morocco. Her use of pagan rites to confront her entrapment and make sense of her world ultimately corrupts her.



In contemporary Morocco, Hayat brings Soussen, her 12-year-old daughter, from their poor village to town, where they find work for Soussen as a "little maid" for a middle-class family. Before dispatching her daughter to her ruthless new employers' home, Hayat takes Soussen to see Aïcha, a witch, and asks her to conduct a rite that will "lock" the girl's virtue. When Soussen finally has a day off, she goes to visit her mother, but Hayat has disappeared. Soussen finds herself alone in an unfamiliar world. Eventually, she returns to Aïcha, her only contact in the town and discovers an underground world of desperate female power. Soussen determines that through magic she can win the love of her employers' eldest son and so rise up from her lowly position.

Contact

In Vivo Films

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Director's Note

Magic and pagan superstitions remain strong in Morocco and, growing up in England, the stories my mother told me about their role in her upbringing have indelibly marked my imagination. My intention is to tell a fable-like story in which magic and its many, often contradictory metaphors can be explored: an outmoded belief system, burgeoning adulthood, the glamour of the settler, the refuge of the wretched, the power of the powerless – ultimately, a kind of resistance. As we watch, a child attempts to make sense of her world through magical rites that ultimately corrupt her – but rather than scandalise the practice, we will come to understand it as a recognisable, fragile kind of hope.

Director's Biography

Fyzal Boulifa is an award-winning writer-director based in Tangier and London. He has directed several short films, including 'Whore' (2008); 'The Curse' (2012), which won the Premier Prix Illy at the Directors' Fortnight at the Festival de Cannes, was nominated for a BAFTA and was selected for the Sundance Film Festival; and 'Rate Me' (2015), which also won the Premier Prix Illy. 'Pagan Magic' marks Boulifa's feature-length film debut.

Company Profile

Based in La Rochelle, France, **In Vivo Films** was set up in 2015 by producer Louise Bellicaud. In Vivo Films aims to support directors and writers from various backgrounds and countries, for short and feature-length films. The company develops projects with a strong cultural identity based on local topics with the potential to reach an international audience.

Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Spring 2015

Lidia Terki

Director / Screenwriter



Moncef Delici

Producer



Paris the White

'Paris la blanche' / Algeria, France, Qatar / Amazigh / 2016

Runtime: 90 min

Genre: Drama

Interests: History, Immigration, Psychology, Social Issues, Women's Issues

Aicha, a woman of 70, leaves her village in Algeria for the first time to go to Paris in search of her husband, who has not contacted her in years.



Aicha married Nour in 1962, the year of Algerian independence. Later, Nour went to work in France among those against whom he had previously fought. At the beginning of his exile, Nour returned to his homeland every summer, but over the years his returns became less frequent. Meanwhile, Aicha and Nour's children grew up and had children in their turn. Not having heard from Nour in years, Aicha decides to leave her village for the first time. She crosses Algeria and finally reaches Paris, where she searches diligently for her husband. The man she finds is no longer the Nour she once knew. So begins their rediscovery of one another in the face of the love that still binds them.

Director's Note

The story begins and ends in the mountains of Kabylia in Algeria, where Aicha, the main character, lives with her children. The other part of the film happens in France. This film is a way to reconnect with my roots, as I have spent most of my adult life in France. The history of the ties between France and Algeria after the war is a painful one, but these ties are also rich ground for beautiful fiction. 'Paris the White' also illustrates the double culture of many Algerians living in France, as immigration and integration are reflected in Aicha's journey, her encounters, illusions and disillusion. I hope to give a different view of immigration; one of an Algerian woman separated from her husband for years - the result of economic reasons and a situation she has never accepted. My main intention is to speak modestly about love in a film about immigration.

Director's Biography

Born in Algeria in the late 1960s, **Lidia Terki** has long lived in France. After law studies, she held various positions in filmmaking. She then directed several short films, which were selected for numerous national and international festivals and won several awards, and directed and produced two documentaries on the theme of electronic music. Terki has recently written her first feature, which she aims to shoot within the next year.

Company Profile

Based in Algiers, **Alegria Production** was created in 2014 by producer Moncef Delici to develop and produce his own projects, and to co-produce projects with French production companies.

Contact

Moncef Delici

Alegria Production Presentation

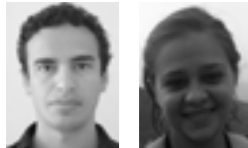
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Production Grant
Feature Narrative
Fall 2015

Fawzi Saleh
Director / Screenwriter



Katim Aitouna, Eman Hemeda
Producer

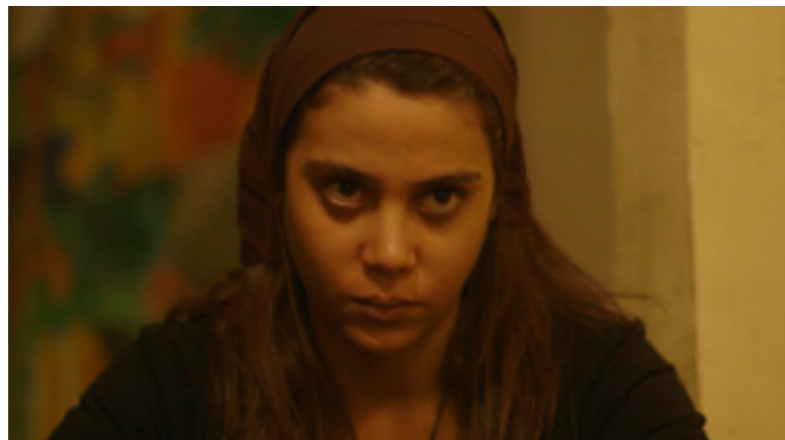


Poisonous Roses

'Ward Masmoom' / Egypt, Qatar / Arabic / 2016

Runtime: 70 min
Genre: Drama
Interests: Social Issues, Women's Issues

The world has left nothing to Taheya apart from her brother Saqr. When he disappears, Taheya pursues him in desperation.



Twenty-eight-year-old Taheya works as a washroom cleaner, and lives with her 22-year-old brother Saqr in a tannery neighbourhood. While Saqr has plans to find a life outside his hellish job in one of the tanneries, Taheya hopes to keep him near her. Despite his love for his sister, Saqr does not bow to the pressure she puts on him and begins a relationship with Nahed, a young medical student. Despondent at the new distance between herself and her brother, Taheya turns to magic to bring Saqr back and threatens to kill Nahed. When Saqr returns, Taheya seems happy despite the coldness between them – but she cannot escape the idea that her brother still wants to abandon her.

Contact
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Director's Note

The environment where I have lived, which is not very different from that of the tanneries, is one drenched in mythology and that poses questions about one's psyche and the very complicated reality in which one lives. As I desire to avoid the stereotypical approach to social issues taken by most Egyptian films, I seek to make a film that engages in a dialogue with the audience; one that makes them question their established ideas and and put their conceptions of this world in perspective. I am also working against the one-dimensional portrayals of the marginalised and the impoverished in most Egyptian films, in which they are seen as murderers, thieves and prostitutes who create havoc in society.

Director's Biography

Born in Port Saïd, Egypt, in 1981, **Fawzi Saleh** is a screenwriter, filmmaker and human-rights activist. He holds a degree in screenwriting from the Cairo Film Institute, and has contributed to numerous documentary films as a researcher and co-writer. In 2006, he directed the experimental short film 'Mocha', which attracted attention to his talent. A turning point in his career came in 2008 when he worked as an assistant director for Rashid Masharawi, when the director encouraged him to start shooting his first documentary feature, 'Living Skin', which he completed in 2010.

Company Profile

Egyptian actor Mahmoud Hemeida founded **Albatrik Art Productions** in 1995. The company's main goal is to support Arab filmmakers and to contribute to the growth and development of filmmaking in Egypt. In 2002, in collaboration with the German institution C.T.Z., Albatrik contributed to a project for youth that resulted in the production of a stage play. The company has also produced musical events at the Cairo Opera House and at Egyptian universities for acclaimed violinist Abdu Dagher. Albatrik assisted in the formation of the Actors' Studio, which supports young talent by providing acting workshops conducted by professional filmmakers.

hautlesmains is a production company based in Lyon. The company aims to produce director-driven films with captivating stories that focus on social and multicultural matters.

Development Grant

Feature Narrative

Spring 2015

Muhannad Lamin

Director / Screenwriter



Queen of the Hoggar

'Malikat Al Hoggar' / Libya, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 90 min

Genre: Action, Animation, Fantasy

Interests: Based on a True Story, Coming of age, History, Identity, Immigration, Politics, War, Women's Issues, Youth

The mythical coming-of-age tale of a princess forced to cross the Sahara to find a new home. 'Queen of the Hoggar' depicts her revolt against complicity and her struggle for identity.



Kella, a young princess, and her elder sister are forced to leave their home because of war. They travel through the Sahara in a small caravan led by a mysterious traveller, who is to guide them to the prosperous Lake City in the Hoggar Mountains so they can start a new life. They find a city enclosed in a giant iron sphere and ruled by an oppressive organisation called the Committee, which was brought to power by a revolution seeking to free the city's people from dictatorship. Instead, the Committee has come to represent a new source of terror for the citizens. Here, Kella meets Afra, who is involved in a plot to overthrow the Committee. Her attraction to Afra and her shocked reaction to the Committee's brutal rule spark Kella's transformation from spoiled girl to revolutionary. She sets out on a new journey to build a culture based on freedom, honour and loyalty – and to become the Queen of the Hoggar.

Director's Note

Four years after the Libyan revolution, I realised that, on a personal level, the conflict removed a heavy curtain; a curtain that hid the stains and dirt of our society as a whole. One of the great tragedies I have seen among youth is the loss of passion and identity. As a young man, I believe this loss creates hopeless generations who try in desperation to find something that might give them some significance – and it is here that militarisation, violence and extremism come to seem like the only choice. For me, Kella's journey represents the search for identity and passion in life, but in a way it also represents the long journey that awaits Libya. 'Queen of the Hoggar' is inspired by my time living in Libya before, during and after the revolution, and the mixed feelings of excitement, joy, sadness and hope that come with that experience.

Director's Biography

Libyan filmmaker **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. In addition to his involvement in several documentary projects, Lamin worked as an editor on the short documentaries 'Poet of the Sea' (2012) and 'Between the Ropes' (2013). He was also assistant editor for the upcoming feature-length documentary 'Freedom Fields', and second camera and assistant editor on an anthropological television documentary for Al Jazeera Documentary about Tabou tribes in southern Libya.

Company Profile

Contact

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Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Spring 2015

Nejib Belkadhi

Director / Screenwriter



Imed Marzouk

Producer



Retina

Tunisia, Qatar / Arabic / 2017

Runtime: 90 min

Genre: Drama

Lotfi, a Tunisian immigrant who lives in France, is forced to return to his homeland to take care of his autistic child.



Lotfi, a fortysomething Tunisian immigrant, leads the life of a small-time thug in the Noailles neighbourhood of Marseille. His daily life is occupied by his home-appliance store and Monique, his French girlfriend, but the past catches up with him when his brother calls from Tunisia to inform him that his wife has had a stroke. Now, Lotfi has to go back home to reclaim custody of his nine-year-old autistic son, Amr, whom he has not seen for six years. Thus begins a journey where Lotfi will face his son, who completely ignores the father he has never known. It is Amr's avoidance of eye contact that drives Lotfi's quest to connect with his son and open him up to the world.

Director's Note

The idea for this film came from a series of photographs by Timothy Archibald called 'Echolilia: Sometimes I Wonder'. I was completely knocked out by Archibald's pictures, which feature an autistic boy posing for his father. Exploring the father-son relationship through the lens of autism proved a tall order, given that the film I wanted to write had less to do with the disorder itself than with a man's rapport with his son and his rediscovered role as a father. 'Retina' is a film about communication and about the denial and acceptance of others, which is why the gaze is placed at the centre of the conflictual relationship between Lotfi and his son, who will be played by an autistic boy. 'Retina' is a film I would like to be at the same time deep and lightweight; my intention is that it should plunge the viewer into the unfathomable experience of an autistic child.

Director's Biography

In 2002, **Nejib Belkadhi** founded Propaganda Productions with his friend Imed Marzouk, who later became his producer. The following year, his feature documentary 'VHS-Kahloucha' had its world premiere at the Festival de Cannes, was in competition at the Sundance Film Festival, was selected for more than 50 festivals and won seven awards. Belkadhi's first feature film 'Bastardo' (2013) had its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival and was selected for the official competition at Cinemed Montpellier in 2014.

Company Profile

Founded in 2002 by Imed Marzouk and Nejib Belkadhi, **Propaganda Production** produces short and feature-length fiction and documentary films. Belkadhi's 'VHS Kahloucha' (2006), which was an Official Selection at the Festival de Cannes, screened in competition at the Sundance Film Festival and won a Gold Muhr at the Dubai International Film Festival; his 'Bastardo' had its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2013. Short films include Belkadhi's 'Tsawer' (2005); Malik Amara's 'Linge Sale' (2010); Walid Mattar's 'Condemnations' (2010) and 'Offerings' (2011); and Nadia Raïs's 'L'Mrayet' (2011) and 'Survival Visa' (2014).

Contact

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Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2015

Meyar Al-Roumi

Director / Screenwriter



Xavier Rocher

Producer



The Return

'Al Aoudeh' / France, Syria, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 90 min

Genre: Drama, Road Trip

A love story blossoms between Taysir and Lina while they drive through Syria to bury Kamal, Taysir's brother, who died during the fighting ravaging the country.



A man and a woman cross Syria at war. Forty-year-old Taysir was exiled in France, but has returned to Syria to bury the body of his elder brother Kamal, who died during the fighting ravaging the country, in the village of his ancestors. Lina, Taysir's young Franco-Syrian passenger, wants to return to France. During the journey, Taysir and Lina come to know each other, and learn that Kamal had joined the jihadists, a betrayal that makes Taysir question his mission. But there is no turning back, and eventually the pair bury Kamal's remains on Mesopotamian land, and find a new lease on life.

Director's Note

The ongoing disaster suffered by Syria, my homeland, is behind the development of this project. In recent years, I have helplessly watched as a stolen revolution – a revolution I had longed for – turned into a civil war of staggering violence. As a result, life has not had the same meaning: neither for me nor for my friends, those close to me, my family. I saw the script for 'The Return' in this way: the story of the burial of Kamal's body was an opportunity to discuss the human impact of this chaos, which has become extremely complex.

Director's Biography

Born in Damascus in 1973, **Meyar Al-Roumi** worked as a photographer before studying cinema in Paris at the Université Paris VIII and La Fémis, from which he graduated in 2001. He worked as a director of photography on several documentary and fiction films in France and in Syria including Omar Amiralay's 'Flood in Baath Country' (2003) and Mohammad Al-Roumi's 'Blue-Grey' (2004), and directed several documentaries, including 'A Silent Cinema' (2001) and 'Waiting for the Day' (2003). Al-Roumi has also directed short fiction films, including 'The Voyage of Rabeya' (2005) and 'Journey' (2011). He completed his first feature-length fiction film, 'Round Trip', in 2012.

Company Profile

La Fabrica Nocturna Productions was created by producers Marina Perales Marhuenda and Xavier Rocher in 2010. The company aims to produce feature films and documentaries that are a high-quality, innovative proposal for cinema, and that open up frontiers for creation from all around the world.

Contact

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Post-Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2015

Niles Atallah

Director / Screenwriter



Lucie Kalmar

Producer



Rey

Chile, Qatar / Spanish / 2016

Runtime: 90 min

Genre: Drama

Interests: Based on a True Story, History

In 1860, a French lawyer dreamed of becoming the King of Patagonia – and he did just that. Or so it seemed.



In 1860, a 35-year-old Frenchman explores Araucania, an autonomous region of southern Chile. The people elect him King of Araucania and Patagonia, uniting the autonomous tribes for the first time. Then, he is confronted by the Chilean court of justice and must defend himself. His reasoning seems flawless: Araucania is outside Chile, so how can Chile condemn him? But when events are retold in the trial, certain facts seem to contradict each other... Imprisoned in a gruesome cell, ill-fed and feverish, the King takes refuge in ecstatic dreams.

Director's Note

From the moment I encountered the story of Orllie-Antoine de Tounens, King of Araucania and Patagonia, I was intrigued by the enigmatic nature of this French lawyer and the scarce memory that remains of him. Buried under layers of myth and legend, there is just enough evidence to prevent this man and his kingdom from sliding into oblivion. 'Rey' came into being as I sifted through the many pieces of the story. I imagined a film that evoked an analogous experience in the spectator: a journey through a realm of forgotten dreams, decaying memories and the fantasies of a ghost. And like a fading memory, they remain a chimera to this day: a king and his kingdom that exist only in dreams.

Director's Biography

Born in California in 1978, **Niles Atallah** is a filmmaker and video artist who lives and works in Santiago, Chile. 'Lucía' (2010), his first film, had its premiere in the Zabaltegi New Directors section of the San Sebastián International Film Festival, and film won the FIPRESCI Prize at Rencontres Cinémas d'Amérique de Toulouse; as well, Atallah was named Best Chilean Director at the Valdivia International Film Festival. In 2008, with artists Joaquín Cociña and Cristóbal León, Niles co-directed 'Lucía, Luis y el lobo', which was shown in many festivals around the world, won numerous awards and garnered one million online views.

Company Profile

Founded in 2005, **Mômerade** is a Paris-based film company founded by producer and consultant Lucie Kalmar. The company has produced a number of trailers and short films and is currently completing its first feature-length production, Niles Atallah's 'Rey'.

Contact

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Post-Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Spring 2015

Francisco Varone

Director / Screenwriter



Gema Juarez Allen, Juan Taratuto

Producer



Road to La Paz

'Camino a La Paz' / Argentina, The Netherlands, Germany, Qatar / Spanish / 2015

Runtime: 92 min

Genre: Road Trip

Sebastián is hired to take Jallil, a Muslim retiree, on the most important mission of his life. What begins as an inconvenient trip turns out to be a life-changing adventure.



Thirty-five-year-old Sebastián's greatest passions are his old Peugeot 505 and the prog-rock band Vox Dei. Short of cash, Sebas takes a job as a limo driver. Among his passengers is the ailing and unkind 85-year-old Jalil, an observant Muslim, who offers Sebas a large amount of money to take him from Buenos Aires to La Paz. What starts out as an inconvenient trip turns out to be a significant adventure for Sebas. Jalil explains that he is going to meet his brother Nazim, whom he has not seen for 40 years, and peregrinate to Mecca. After the long and winding road to La Paz, Jalil is reunited with Nazim. Sebas heads home, his mission accomplished, his life changed.

Director's Note

'Road to La Paz' tells of an encounter between two men: Sebas, an unemployed young man and Jalil, an elderly Muslim. The unlikely pair start a 3,000-kilometre road trip, which becomes a testing ground for their relationship and spirit. The road provides an opportunity for exchange and learning, and the trip is a true adventure that takes us from the city toward the unknown. The film has a realistic tone that allows for strong identification with the characters as well as the stories they encounter. 'Road to La Paz' grows emotionally until the last minute, exploring the clash between two men from different generations and cultural backgrounds. It is a coming-of-age film for late-comers, an endearing encounter between distant cultures, and a humbling learning experience for all.

Director's Biography

Francisco Varone was born in 1978 in Buenos Aires. In 1999, he graduated from the Universidad del Cine and started his career as an assistant director on commercials and feature films the following year. He has received three Lions d'Or at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, a Clio Award and a Sol de Oro – San Sebastián for some of the nearly 100 commercials he shot between 2005 and 2011. Between 2008 and 2010, Varone participated in scriptwriting workshops with Pablo Solarz. He has studied dramaturgy with Mauricio Kartún, Ignacio Apolo and Ariel Barchilón, and attended scriptwriting classes with Juan José Campanella and Aída Bortnik.

Company Profile

Based in Buenos Aires, **Gema Films** was founded in 2009 by Gema Juárez Allen. The company makes high-quality films for both Argentine and international audiences with a focus on art-house and documentary films. Currently, Gema is producing Andrés Di Tella's '327 Cuadernos' and Felipe Guerrero's 'Oscuro Animal'. Among the company's other credits are Francisco Varone's 'Camino a La Paz' (2015), Abner Benaim's 'Invasión' (2014), Victor Kossakovsky's '¡Vivan las Antipodas!' (2011), which opened the Venice International Film Festival; Alejo Hoijman's 'El ojo del tiburón' (2012), which premiered at the Rome Film Festival; and Guerrero's 'Corta' (2012), which had its premiere at the International Film Festival Rotterdam.

Contact

Gema Films

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Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Spring 2015

Khalifa Al-Muraikhi

Director / Screenwriter



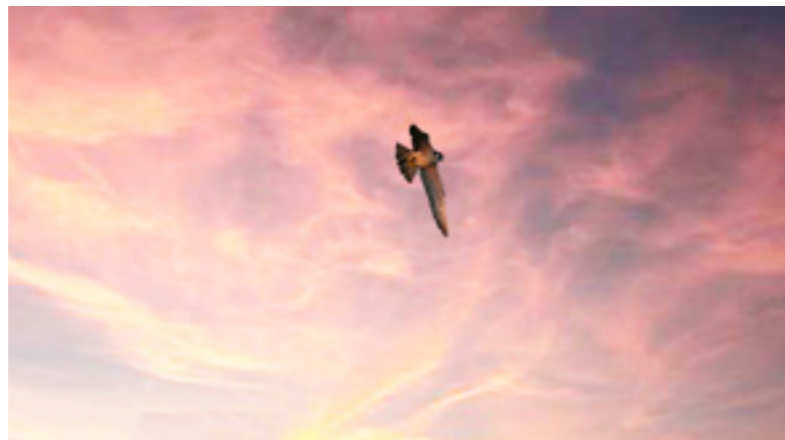
Sahaab

Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 100 min

Genre: Drama

When Nasser and his friends are lost in the desert, struggling to retrieve their falcon, their search turns out to be a deadly journey.



Following his brother's death, Nasser and his friend Sanad decide to participate in a falcon race. It's not long before Nasser's falcon Sahaab is lost due to the carelessness of Talib, a photographer who tags along to document the journey. In their search for Sahaab in the harsh Arabian Desert, the trio fall victim to harsh circumstances that force them to make fateful decisions, and to re-examine the relationship among man, bird and desert. What will Nasser and his friends lose – or gain – in their search?

Director's Note

'Sahaab' will be greatly different from the films I have made before; it is an accumulation of my experience and a creative collision. Working within the adventure drama genre, I am going to focus on the psychological side of the characters and lead the audience to sense the great bond between man and bird, and the characters who are transformed in the vast desert, becoming a part of it. I did not set out to tell a story about a lost falcon; 'Sahaab' is a story about a struggle, about survival, love, passion and the inner perception of the new world that the characters live in. The ending is unexpected; the bird never returns, but memories remain.

Director's Biography

Khalifa Al-Muraikhi was born in Doha and holds a BA from Chapman University in Los Angeles. From a very early age, painting was his passion and this would eventually lead to a career in filmmaking. He was drawn into cinema by directors like Salah Abu Saif, Michelangelo Antonioni, Alfred Hitchcock and Orson Welles. His films include 'The Blind Girl' (2000), which took the golden trophy at the Cairo Film and Television Festival; 'Threads Beneath Sands' (2003), winner of the Golden Dagger at the Muscat International Film Festival; the award-winning 'The End' (2004), bronze trophy winner at the Arab Film and TV Festival. 'Clockwise' (2009), which he also wrote, was the first feature-length film made in Qatar. He is currently in pre-production with 'Sahaab', from his own screenplay.

Contact

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Development Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2015

Hafiz Ali Ali

Director / Screenwriter



David Abramowitz, Tom Abrams

Screenwriter



The Search for the Star Pearl

'Al Bahath An Danan Al Najoom' / Qatar / Arabic, English

Runtime: 90 min

Genre: Animation

Ali, a 17-year-old pearl diver from Doha, discovers a map to the Star Pearl of Abu Derya, the most valuable gem on Earth, and sets sail with three teenaged friends in search of it. Along the way, they face mythological beasts that challenge their skills and friendship.



Ali ibn Hamad, a brave, 17-year-old Qatari boy, sails the unknown seas with his friends, the fun-loving Belal and science-minded Rashid, hoping to find the Star Pearl of Abu Derya. The legendary pearl is reputed to be the most valuable gem on Earth, but its hiding place is protected by a terrifying demon. Ali's journey takes him across the Gulf to the shores of India and the South China Sea, where he and his friends battle pirates, an evil wizard and mythological creatures from antiquity. The adventure challenges their wits, their lives and – most importantly – their hearts when they face the Dragon King, the monstrous guardian of the priceless treasure.

Contact

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Director's Note

'The Search for the Star Pearl' is a story I am very passionate about telling. The concept developed a few years ago as I was working on 'Garangao' (2008), a children's film based on traditional and cultural events. I wanted to expand the seafaring universe and dive into something on a much larger scale and open a new dimension filled with sea creatures and colonies on the edge of the world. For the past couple of years I have been living in this world, developing the story with two talented writers from the United States, fleshing out the script and carefully building the visual world and narrative for 'The Search for the Star Pearl'. The film is a unique project in that it is not only a one-of-a-kind tale inspired by Arabian Gulf folklore, but a dramatic adventure that has yet to be told in full-length animated form.

Director's Biography

Hafiz Ali Ali is an established Qatari film producer and director with extensive experience in the arts. He began his creative endeavours in theatre while still in school, and has participated in numerous local and regional festivals and appeared in several television series. Ali graduated from the California Institute of the Arts in 1999 with a BFA in Theatre Design and Technology and from Chapman University in 2005 with an MFA in Film and TV Directing; he obtained his Executive MBA degree from HEC Paris in 2014. Between 2000 and 2009, he directed several television shows and documentary films for Qatar TV and Al Jazeera Children's Channel before working for the Qatar Foundation as Arts Programme Manager; since 2013, Ali has been Heritage Houses Manager for Msheireb Museums and recently he was appointed Director of Msheireb Museums. His films, which have been selected for many international film festivals and won several awards, include 'The Oryx Return' (2007) and 'Scents and Shadows' (2010). His feature-length screenplay 'The DNA of Love' is currently in development.

Development Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2015

Laila Hotait Salas

Director / Screenwriter



Nadia Hotait

Producer



Stolen Skies

'Al Samaa' Al Masroukah' / Lebanon, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 130 min

Genre: Drama

When a bomb is detonated in Cairo, one family feels it ricochet through the erased memories of three generations.



Cairo, June 2015, 6:00 AM. An explosion shatters a window, knocking Lola, a 40-year old-Egyptian journalist, unconscious. During the subsequent days she spends in hospital, Lola must leave her 10-year-old daughter Natalie with her grandmother, Dalal, with whom Lola does not have a very good relationship. Dalal, a photographer, lives with past trauma and a great sense of guilt. The explosion acts as a big bang in these women's lives as it exposes what Dalal's ex-husband has hidden for 40 years: that he was responsible for the murder of Dalal's secret lover - Lola's biological father. This discovery allows Dalal to forgive herself and reconnect with her suppressed memories of Lebanon in the 1970s, as well as with her daughter.

Contact

Laaventura

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Director's Note

'Stolen Skies' deals with my obsessions: love, that brutal emotion that can arise at the most unfortunate moments; memories, those dramatic experiences that stay with us and take us off guard when they return unexpectedly; and forgiveness, as a tool for liberation. The frame of the film is the intimacy of daily life in Egypt and Lebanon, two countries that have been largely defined by their political context, and by their difficult times, when the average citizen has had to struggle to pursue a normal life, if such a thing is still possible. Dalal and Ali's love story points to the historical relationship between Egypt and Lebanon, a powerful and important one that ended abruptly, leading to a dark time during which political aspirations and dreams were extinguished.

Director's Biography

Laila Hotait Salas, Ph.D, is a Lebanese-Spanish filmmaker and artist. Her first documentary film, 'Crayons of Askalan' (2011) has been presented in more than 20 film festivals, including Hot Docs, the Doha Tribeca Film Festival, CPH:DOX and DocsDF. Her sound art works have been presented at international venues such as the Centre Pompidou, the Kunst-im-Tunnel Museum Düsseldorf and several art galleries. Hotait was selected by the CPH:LAB as an international emerging film talent in 2011, and co-directed the film 'From a Distance' with Rania M. Tawfik the same year. Her work has received support from institutions including the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture, the Sundance Documentary Fund Programme, Screen Institute Beirut and the Doha Film Institute.

Company Profile

Laaventura is an award-winning production platform set up by the Hotait sisters based in Beirut, Madrid and Mexico. We specialise in work that focuses on narrative content with striking visuals, while striving to create amusing and thought provoking stories. Laaventura manages a wide variety of projects from film and documentary to large format video-installations and transmedia projects. Laaventura has been producing content in Arabic, English and Spanish since 2009. Our work has been broadcast on networks including BBC Arabic, Al Jazeera and Documania, and has been presented internationally at more than 50 film festivals. Laaventura's video-installation work has been exhibited at galleries and museums throughout the world, and the company has received several awards for its artistic production.

Post-Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2015

Ala Eddine Slim

Director / Screenwriter



Mohamed Ismail Louati

Producer



Suspension

'Taaaliq' / Tunisia, Qatar / Arabic / 2016

Runtime: 100 min

Genre: Drama

Interests: Immigration, Social Issues

N is a candidate for an illegal crossing of the Mediterranean from Tunisia. A supernatural voyage, during which N will confront Nature and himself, begins.



N crosses the desert to North Africa, intending to obtain illegal passage to Europe. After he is robbed, he finds himself alone in Tunisia. Eventually, he decides to make the sea crossing on his own; he steals a boat and sets off, but the boat shuts down in open water. From that moment on, N experiences his crossing in a unique way. He is confronted by the forces of Nature, and by his own humanity.

Director's Note

I have always wanted to tell the story of an illegal immigrant who disappeared at sea. This film is related to numerous events of recent years in Tunisia and the surrounding region. N, a refugee in an undefined situation in a foreign country, is in transit towards a strange land. Detached from Tunisian society, he knows no one and does not speak the local language. For him, there is no "home". His distance from his native land coupled with his unclear situation inspire an illegal sea crossing to Europe and what he believes will be a better future. Once he leaves the shores of Tunisia, N is a disappearing body. He discovers his primary connection to nature; enduring its laws, he does nothing but adapt and find ways to survive.

Director's Biography

Born in 1982, **Ala Eddine Slim** 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', in 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'.

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

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Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2015

Karim Moussaoui

Director / Screenwriter



Jaber Debzi

Producer



Till the Swallows Return

'En attendant les hirondelles' / Algeria, France, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 110 min

Genre: Drama, Road Trip

Interests: Social Issues

This is the story of three characters who are a product of the conflicted Algeria of the 2000s. Their ideals shattered and their moral strength drained, each now faces a difficult life choice.



Mourad, a businessman, rose to success in Algeria in the 2000s. Now a new man, he wants to stay away from trouble. When he comes across a fight in which a man's life is in danger, he decides not to step in or provide assistance. Aisha is done with the past. About to start a new life as a married woman, she starts on the journey toward her new family, accompanied by her father and Jalil, a neighbour. Dahman is a doctor. He too hopes to start over – he wants to marry his cousin, and patiently awaits the promotion that would confirm his social status. Each of these three characters will have to face up to the consequences of their choices.

Contact

Prolégomènes

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Director's Note

The stories of my film are set in the context of the beginning of the 2000s in Algeria. These are social stories: they involve ordinary people living ordinary lives. The screenplay is based on a series of portraits of three characters struggling with the daily demands of life and with Algeria's recent history. They are approaching a turning point in their personal lives; they are being offered the choice to take control of their destiny. But they all choose the status quo, whether due to lack of courage or fear of change. In the film, these life choices are played out by placing the characters' ambitions for a better life alongside the fulfilment (or not) of those desires. My aim is to bring tragedy into the banality of daily life, without weighing down the story. The spectator is led to conclude that Algeria is trapped in a social deadlock.

Director's Biography

Born in 1975, **Karim Moussaoui** is an active member of Chrysalis, one of Algeria's most important independent film associations. Moussaoui has worked on a number of plays and films, among them 'Paloma Delight' with Nadir Mokneche. In 2006, he made his first two short films: 'What We Must Do', based on Charles Bukowsky's short story 'The Copulating Mermaid of Venice'; and 'Breakfast'. In 2011, his feature film script 'Till the Swallows Return' was selected for the Méditalents writing workshop; there he met Virginie Legeay, with whom he co-wrote the screenplay for 'Les Jours d'avant'. 'Till the Swallows Return' was developed during the Cinéfondation's Résidence du Festival de Cannes between October, 2014 and February, 2015.

Company Profile

After co-producing 'The Days Before' (2013), a medium-length narrative film by Karim Moussaoui, Jaber Debzi founded **Prolégomènes**, an Algerian production and distribution company, in 2015. Its mission is to support bold film projects driven by a new generation of Algerian directors, among them Moussaoui and Djamel Kerkar. The company's strategy is to accompany filmmakers throughout the life of their films to ensure that the work emerges during a time when Arab cinema remains fragile. Currently, Prolégomènes has two feature-length films in production: Moussaoui's narrative feature 'Till the Swallows Return' and Kerkar's creative documentary 'Spectres', as well as 'The Moped and the Goldfinch', a short narrative film by Amir Bensaïfi.

Les Films Pelléas was launched in 1990 by Philippe Martin with a grant from the Hachette Foundation. In 1996, Martin was awarded the Georges de Beauregard Prize for Young Producer. The company now consists of two producers, Martin and David Thion. Les Films Pelléas focuses on narrative films for the big screen directed by both young and experienced filmmakers, and has produced more than 60 feature-length films. It has an extensive network throughout the French-speaking territories, as well as co-production experience with Belgium, Canada, Germany, Romania and Switzerland.

Post-Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Spring 2015

Mir-Jean Bou Chaaya

Director / Screenwriter / Producer



Alain Saadeh

Screenwriter



Lucien Bou Chaaya, Christian Bou Chaaya

Producer



Very Big Shot

'Film Kteer Kbeer' / Lebanon, Qatar / Arabic, English, French / 2015

Runtime: 107 min

Genre: Action, Comedy, Drama, Thriller

Interests: Based on a True Story, Youth

When a drug delivery to Syria spins out of control, three brothers seize on the opportunity to make a fortune - but eventually, they discover there are forces more powerful than they are.



In this take on the caper film, three brothers find themselves inextricably bound up in the Beirut underworld. While Jad has been serving five years behind bars for a crime his elder brother Ziad committed, Ziad and Joe have been moving product for a local drug lord. When running a last shipment to Syria spins out of control, the three find themselves in possession of a vast quantity of amphetamines, and Ziad hatches a dangerous plan. 'Very Big Shot' is a very dark comedy that skewers political corruption and the circus that goes with it.

Director's Note

The projected image – or, better, the received image – can always mask reality, making it difficult to reveal the original image, especially when it is buried under countless layers of meaning. This dissimulation may be unintentional, all the more so when there is no particular reason to present a disguised reality. On the other hand, when reality is purposefully camouflaged, the recipient of the image is a victim of manipulation that places them in a state of misperception, one where reality and fiction are confused. It is this understanding of the power of the image that this film projects, a concept that underlines the authority imposed on us as a result of the fact that we only see what is shown to us. I intend to keep the spectator open to all sorts of interpretations by playing with the mise-en-abyme effect in an honest, real-looking cinema, as if exposing the true fiction within the guise of reality.

Director's Biography

Born in Beirut in 1989, **Mir-Jean Bou Chaaya** obtained his Master's degree in Cinema with high distinction from the Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts in 2012. He started his career in 2008 with a music video dedicated to Lebanese army martyrs, and has written, directed or edited eight short films, five of which were aired on local television and two of which won several awards at acclaimed international film festivals. He also directed a 12-episode television series and wrote 10 short documentaries profiling Arab immigrants in Argentina. In 2013, Bou Chaaya co-founded SuppAr – The Arab Art Support Group, which aims to produce high-calibre motion pictures and fine art in the region.

Company Profile

Kabreet Productions was established in 2014 as an answer to a growing need for support and because of the lack of a rooted cinema industry in Lebanon. Initiated by a group of filmmakers, lawyers and financial advisors, Kabreet intends to enrich regional works, providing a foundation for young generations to show their imagination to the world. Kabreet collaborates with SuppAr – The Arab Art Support Group, aiming to open the right channels and hopefully become a key player in promoting Arab cinema and culture.

Contact

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Feature Documentary

[Agnus Dei](#)

[Batata](#)

[Behind the Doors](#)

[Beirut Rooster](#)

[Between Sisters](#)

[The Colonel's Stray Dogs](#)

[Ghost Hunting](#)

[The Great Family](#)

[Ibrahim](#)

[Janitou](#)

[Liyana](#)

[Seeking the Man with the Camera](#)

[Tadmor](#)

[To the Ends of the Earth](#)

[Weight Throwers](#)

[When Two Worlds Collide](#)

Feature Experimental or Essay

[Roundabout in My Head](#)

Development Grant
Feature Documentary
Fall 2015

Karim Sayad
Director



Joëlle Bertossa
Producer



Agnus Dei

Switzerland, Algeria, Qatar / Arabic / 2017

Runtime: 80 min
Genre: Creative Documentary

On the vacant lot where the confrontation takes place, the tension is at its peak. Foufa and his sheep King are getting ready for the fight...



It is late summer, 2016, and in Algiers sheep have invaded the streets. On the balconies, the streets, walked on leashes; they do not suspect the tragic end that awaits them. Eid is approaching, and all will be sacrificed on the occasion of the feast. But not King, the powerful ram from El Harrach, a tough neighbourhood in the suburbs of Algiers. For the past six months, King has been subjected to training worthy of an elite athlete. His master, 22-year-old Foufa, runs an Internet café and dreams of becoming a sheep trainer recognised throughout the neighborhood. On the vacant lot where the confrontation takes place, the tension is at its height. The fight can begin.

Contact

Close Up Films
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Director's Note

'Agnus Dei' seeks to draw a parallel between the violence present in the relationship of the master to his animal and that in the relationship of society to individuals. The aim of the film is neither an apology for violence against animals nor an attempt to justify it; rather, it wishes to ask what these mistreatments might tell us of the challenges faced by the youth of Algeria in a country that offers them little hope. The intention is not to judge the violence, but instead to focus on how these men's exploitation of animals is an outlet for their frustrations. The human violence visited on the animals is seen as an unconscious reflection of the violence undergone by citizens in the current political system.

Director's Biography

Karim Sayad was born in Lausanne in 1984 to an Algerian father and a Swiss mother. After obtaining an MA in International Relations from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies of Geneva, he decided to become a documentary filmmaker. 'Babor Casanova' (2015), his first film, was selected for numerous international film festivals, including the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival, and won awards from Doclisboa and the Festival dei Popoli in Florence.

Company Profile

Close Up Films is an independent production company based in Geneva. Not limited by genre, Close Up undertakes a wide range of fiction and documentary projects. Aspiring to reach a wide audience with projects that are demanding in both form and content, Close Up produces films from both young talents and established auteurs. Our films strive to question society and expand viewpoints on cinema and the world, and we choose to work on projects with international appeal, collaborating regularly with foreign partners.

Production Grant
Feature Documentary
Spring 2015

Noura Kevorkian
Director / Producer



Paul Scherzer
Producer



Batata

Lebanon, Canada, Qatar / Arabic / 2016

Runtime: 80 min

Genre: Creative Documentary

Interests: Identity, Immigration, Social Issues

After 30 years of working the potato fields of Lebanon, Syrian migrant workers suddenly find themselves stateless refugees.



In a tent 'village' set in the Beqaa Valley of Lebanon, Abu Jamil and his large Syrian family work for the Lebanese landowner, Mousa. What goes on in this camp on a daily basis is a wider representation of the reality of life in this region of the Middle East, with war in Syria, unemployment, pregnant women, teenagers in love and grown men dreaming of wives they can't afford... all in the setting of the green fields of Beqaa Valley, where potatoes are produced for local consumption and for export to the rest of the Middle East. 'Batata' is a feature documentary about the relationship between hired labour and landowner, about friends in odd times and newly formed enemies, about people connected by the intricate ties of family, work and politics. While this is not a political film, politics proves to be the daily language of the region.

Contact

Musa Dagh Productions
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Director's Note

As a filmmaker from the Beqaa Valley, I am naturally drawn to stories about my region. I am Lebanese, but also Syrian. My mother is Syrian, my father Lebanese. I was born in Aleppo but I grew up in Lebanon. All my life I have felt the political, social and cultural attraction/repulsion between my two countries and I wanted to find an innovative way to document it. 'Batata' is an amazing human story focused on the invisible population of Syrians who dot the fields of Lebanon, working all day, planting and harvesting food that will feed not only Lebanon, but also their own country and other parts of the Middle East. Beneath the surface of this idyllic pastoral setting lie deep-rooted issues that form the backdrop of the daily existence of these migrant workers.

Director's Biography

Noura Kevorkian is a Lebanese-Canadian filmmaker. Along with her film studies, Kevorkian holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Toronto, specialising in Economics and Middle East Studies. She made her filmmaking debut with the multi-award winning short 'Veils Uncovered' (2002), which was followed by her feature-length debut 'ANJAR: Flowers, Goats and Heroes' (2009). Her '23 Kilometres' (2015) was selected for the Official Competition at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival. Kevorkian is currently directing 'Batata', her second feature-length documentary.

Company Profile

Based in Toronto and founded by Noura Kevorkian, **Saaren Films** has produced several award-winning feature and short documentary films, including Kevorkian's 'ANJAR: Flowers, Goats and Heroes' (2009), which screened at the Docudays Beirut International Film Festival, and 'Veils Uncovered' (2002), which was in the Official Competition at the International Documentary Festival Amsterdam and won the Golden Sheaf at the Yorkton Short Film Festival. Saaren mostly works with Arab filmmakers and routinely co-produces with companies in Lebanon and Canada. The company's latest production is Kevorkian's '23 Kilometres' (2015), an Official Competition entry in the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival. This bold essay film is a hybrid documentary-drama about the final days of a man with late-stage Parkinson's disease. Saaren's slate currently includes the feature-length documentary 'Batata', co-produced with Musa Dagh Productions (Lebanon) and Six Island Productions (Canada), as well as several other films at various stages of development.

Development Grant
Feature Documentary
Fall 2015

Yakout Elhababi
Director



Vincent Melilli
Producer



Behind the Doors

'Mor L'bab' / Morocco / Arabic

Runtime: 80 min

Genre: Biography, Creative Documentary

Interests: Children, Environment, Psychology, Social Issues, Women's Issues, Youth

High in the Rif mountains of Morocco, the people survive by growing kif. Beneath the shadow of the ambiguous legality of the crop, 'Behind the Doors' tells the story of a family through its children and their mirroring games.



'Behind the Doors' is a portrait of a farming family living in one of the most marginalised regions of northern Morocco. Only one thing grows in their brutal climate: kif. This taboo is seen through the eyes of the children, who learn the gestures of growing the illicit crop before their mother tongue. This is a film about parents fighting to provide role models against all odds. They inherited the lands, and stand somewhere between the fear of selling out their roots and the dream of fleeing.

Contact

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Director's Note

What fascinated me about this story were the secrets, the ambiguity, and the silences around the subject, and meeting the families involved is a testament to a monumental hypocrisy. Their children are moulded into the life awaiting them, but when it comes to children, we adults are more understanding of the external influences that shape them. Working under this assumption, I am giving the prospect of immunity to these adults who are considered criminals. The greatest challenge from my perspective is establishing the means to show taboo subjects and concealed images without becoming voyeuristic. As my grandfather is from a nearby village, I know the region from my childhood, and this gives my camera unique and discreet access today. I will live with the families over a period of time, leaving and returning to the rhythm of the seasons.

Director's Biography

Yakout Elhababi graduated from the ESAV Marrakech film school in 2010, and INSAS Brussels in 2013, where she studied editing. She has worked on several Moroccan narrative and documentary productions, and also works as a freelance editor. Elhababi is currently developing 'Behind the Doors', her first feature-length documentary, set in her home region of northern Morocco.

Company Profile

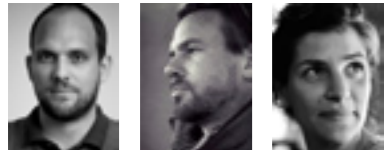
Esav Production was launched in 2015. Its mission is to guide students of the École Supérieure des Arts Visuels de Marrakech (ESAV) through the making of their first professional projects, and to produce a new generation of filmmakers and cinema professionals in Morocco and the African continent. In 2015, Esav Production developed five short films, and work is underway on six shorts and a feature-length documentary in 2016.

Post-Production Grant
Feature Documentary
Spring 2015

Ziad Kalthoum
Director



**Ansgar Frerich, Tobias N. Siebert,
Eva Kemme**
Producer



Beirut Rooster

'Deek Beirut' / Syria, Lebanon, Qatar / Arabic / 2016

Runtime: 65 min
Genre: Creative Documentary

While Syrian workers rebuild Lebanon, a country ruined by a lengthy civil war, their hometowns in Syria are destroyed during the brutal conflict there. Who will rebuild their houses?



Each morning at sunrise, Syrian workers in Lebanon climb construction sites, their hammer strokes waking the country – a country they only know from distance, as they are banned from moving through it, or swimming in its sea. While these Beirut Roosters rebuild Lebanese houses, the war in Syria destroys their own homes. That war brought together director Ziad Kalthoum, who left the Syrian Army to find refuge in Lebanon, and his fellow compatriots who work in Beirut. In this city, they share feelings of being alienated, unwanted and negated by Lebanese society. At night, they move into a hole underneath the construction site: their new home. Down here, the memories of home, war and what they have left behind plague them. Together, they share the pain and fear of losing their home country while finding themselves unable to construct a life for themselves.

Contact
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Director's Note

Twenty years after the end of the Lebanese Civil War, I have come to settle in Beirut, fleeing Syria, my home country, which has declared war against itself. In this city, with its sky full of cranes, I feel as though I am living in a giant cement mixer. In the morning, I am awakened by the din of banging and digging on construction sites where Syrian workers rebuild a city and a society that is hostile toward them. The Syrian worker – Beirut's rooster – lives beneath the construction sites, only rising above the city to build its towers. After a long day of hard work, he is forced to return to his subterranean room, forbidden to roam the streets of a city that still carries the scars of its recent wars. Telling this story of the Syrian worker who rebuilds this nation, which has but a fragile peace, while his own country is engulfed in a war with no end in sight, reflects the paradox he and I are living in at the moment – a paradox that might see the Syrian war reach Beirut and destroy everything Syrian workers have built.

Director's Biography

Ziad Kalthoum was born in Homs in 1981 and graduated after studies in film. He has worked as an assistant director on several films, series and television programmes, including Mohammad Malas's 'Ladder to Damascus' (2013). In 2011, he directed his first documentary, 'Oh, My Heart', which was selected for the Carthage Film Festival. Kalthoum's first feature-length documentary 'The Immortal Sergeant' (2013), deals with the schizophrenic daily life and encounters he experiences between his mandatory military service in the Syrian Army and his role as assistant director during the shooting of 'Ladder to Damascus'. 'The Immortal Sergeant' was screened at the Festival del Film Locarno in 2014 and the Fribourg International Film Festival in 2015.

Company Profile

Created in 2013, **Bidayyat** specialises in producing short and feature-length documentaries by emerging filmmakers from the Arab world who wish to question and reflect on the reality they bear witness to in their own distinctive way. Bidayyat aims to contribute to the re-emergence of a documentary cinema in the Middle East that relates to, and interacts with, its societies.

Post-Production Grant
Feature Documentary
Spring 2015

Manu Gerosa
Director



Hanne Phlypo
Producer



Between Sisters

Italy, Qatar / Italian / 2015

Runtime: 80 min

Genre: Creative Documentary

Interests: Coming of age, Women's Issues

Before life runs out, Ornella decides to confront her aging sister Teresa with a painful untold story that might change their close bond forever.



Sisters Ornella and Teresa have cared for each other throughout their lives. Teresa is now in her life's twilight and having problems facing fate, while her memory is slowly fading. Before it's too late, Ornella decides to confront Teresa with a painful untold story that goes back to their childhood and might change their close bond forever. The film is a warm portrayal of an Italian family, seen through the eyes of Ornella's son, Manu. With humour and tenderness we discover how time forces us to look behind us and confront ourselves with the choices we have made in life.

Contact

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Director's Note

I made this film with a desire to capture the present before it was too late. My Aunt Teresa was getting older and was starting to lose her memory. I wanted to film her and her exceptional relationship with my mother Ornella, who is 21 years her junior. Soon, the eye of the camera became a mirror in which Ornella and Teresa could confront themselves in an unusually honest way. After one year of filming, they opened the door to an untold family story, a story Aunt Teresa refused to speak about even if it had changed her life; a story my mother did not dare ask about, even if it was a missing part of her identity. The film is an emotional and intense journey about these women, their weaknesses and – most of all – the strength they have to overcome them. It is also a universal statement about the need we all have to look for hidden answers so that we can know and be who we really are before our time runs out.

Director's Biography

Manu Gerosa was born in Rovereto, Italy, in 1975, and graduated with a degree in Contemporary History from the University of Bologna in 2001. He moved to Spain and began working as a director and editor on commercials, documentaries and television series. He co-directed the documentaries 'Kamenge Northern Quarters' (2010) and 'Lion Souls' (2012). A few years ago, Gerosa moved back to his hometown to work on his new project, 'Between Sisters', which won the Docs in Progress Award at the Thessaloniki Documentary Festival in 2013, and a Dok.Incubator Award in 2014.

Company Profile

Clin d'Oeil Films is a young and dynamic production company run by Antoine Vermeesch and Hanne Phlypo that focuses on creative documentaries and author-driven films initiated by innovative filmmakers. The company's filmography includes Bülent Öztürk's short film 'Houses with Small Windows' (2010), which was selected for the Orizzonti section of the Venice International Film Festival and nominated for a European Film Award, as well as Hanne and Catherine Vuylsteke's 'Silent Stories' (2010) and 'The Art of Becoming' (2010), which was nominated for an Ensor and won both the RTBF Award and the Grand Prix at the Festival des Libertés. In 2014, Clin d'Oeil produced Damien Chemin's documentary series 'Fanáticos' and released Teodora Ana Mihai's 'Waiting for August', which was named Best International Documentary at Hot Docs and Best Feature Documentary at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, and was nominated for a European Film Award. Projects currently on the company's slate include Pieter Van Eecke's 'Samuel in the Clouds', which won Best Pitch at GOOD MOOOV 2014, and Manu Gerosa's 'Between Sisters', which won the Docs in Progress Award at the Thessaloniki Documentary Festival in 2013, and a Dok.Incubator Award in 2014.

Production Grant
Feature Documentary
Fall 2015

Khalid Shamis
Director



Steven Markovitz
Producer



The Colonel's Stray Dogs

'Kilab al-Aqeed Adhallah' / Libya, South Africa, Qatar / Arabic, English / 2017

Runtime: 72 min

Genre: Creative Documentary

Interests: History, Politics, Social Issues

While Khalid Shamis grew up watching 80s television in his suburban London home, his father was plotting the overthrow of Gadaffi from his study. When the regime finally fell, Khalid sought answers about Libya under Gadaffi and his father's role in its failed liberation.



Libya is on fire. Militias born of the revolution battle for power as two conflicted governments face civil war and fragmentation in a fraught and complex political landscape. The exiled founding members of the major opposition to Muammar Gadaffi had a set of ideals that they tried but failed to implement during the dictator's 40-year rule. After Gadaffi's demise in 2011, they rushed back to the old country and into major governmental positions. They soon found themselves rejected by the new Libya and are now experiencing a second exile from their homeland. My father is one of these men. When the regime fell and my father returned, I sought answers about Libya under Gadaffi and my father's role in its failed liberation as a "stray dog".

Contact

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Director's Note

'The Colonel's Stray Dogs' explores Libya's past, present and future through the eyes of some of those opposed in an accounting of a country deep with complexities and confusion. The film will allow me to understand a time that I had very little access to as a child of exile, along with the imagined world of my father that I had only ever had glimpses of. This past, coupled with the state of today's Libya, means I am drawn to explore this story through my own being. I am fascinated by how opposition movements to dictators often have a starkly differing, and at times a truer, account of history than the ones we think we know.

Director's Biography

Having worked in the film industries of the UK, Middle East and Southern Africa, **Khalid Shamis** now runs Tubafilms, his own production company, from Cape Town. Shamis has lectured at the WITS University in Johannesburg, holds the South African Guild of Editors acronym and has acquired numerous awards for his work. His feature-length documentary, 'Imam and I' (2011), received critical acclaim.

Company Profile

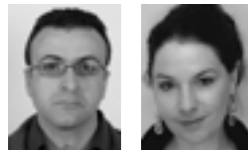
Led by Khalid Shamis, **Tubafilms** is a Cape Town-based production company dedicated to documentary filmmaking in Africa and the Middle East. The company takes projects on board from conception, taking them through development, post-production, broadcast and specific delivery. Tubafilms recognises the continent's need to nurture storytelling via visual media, and our philosophy is that the art of structure and story is that of death and rebirth. Productions to date include Shamis's award-winning short film 'The Killing of the Imam' (2010), which was named Best South African Short Film at the South African Film and Television Awards, and his feature-length documentary 'Imam and I' (2011), which won the Encounters International South African Documentary Festival Audience Award.

Production Grant
Feature Documentary
Spring 2015

Raed Andoni
Director / Producer



Saed Andoni, Palmyre Badinier
Producer



Ghost Hunting

'Estayad Ashbah' / Palestine, France, Qatar, Switzerland / Arabic / 2016

Runtime: 90 min
Genre: Creative Documentary,
Interests: Psychology, Social Issues

Director Raed Andoni assembles an eclectic group of Palestinians to rebuild the Israeli investigation centre in which they were imprisoned - a place they never actually saw because they were always blindfolded.



As a result of being jailed in the Shin Bet's Al-Moskobiya investigation centre at the age of 18, director Raed Andoni has fragments of memories he cannot determine as real or imagined. In order to confront the ghosts that haunt him, Andoni decides to try to rebuild that mysterious place. Responding to a job announcement seeking ex-inmates of Al-Moskobiya who have experience in construction, architecture, painting, carpentry and acting, a large group gathers in an empty yard near Ramallah. Together, they start a journey in which they rediscover the shape of their old prison, try to face the consequences of being under absolute control, and attempt to re-enact a story that took place inside the centre's walls.

Contact
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Director's Note

In Palestine, more than four in ten men are either arrested or interrogated in Israeli prisons at some point in their lives - most often during early adulthood. This common experience serves both as a form of initiation and as exposure to physical and psychological trauma. First and foremost, however, this experience is a lesson in dominance - domination by the other, of the other and of the self; the relationships built on the binary values of dominant/subordinate, once experienced, repeat themselves endlessly, even among Palestinians. Through this project I propose a framework in which ex-prisoners are free to relive their experiences, as long as they participate: by building the jail, playing the role of someone else, or sharing the memories that haunt them. This project is about addressing the traumatic experience of torture and changing perspectives on it, in order to free, or at least discover, another part of oneself.

Director's Biography

Born in Palestine in 1967, **Raed Andoni** started his career in cinema as an independent producer in 1998. He cofounded Dar Films, a leading production company, and produced and secured international distribution for a number of Palestinian films. 'Improvisation' (2005), Andoni's first medium-length documentary as a director, was produced in association with ARTE and saw great success at festivals. His first feature-length film, 'Fix Me' (2009), was screened at the Sundance Film Festival and the Festival de Cannes, released in European cinemas, and won several prizes, including the SCAM award for Best Documentary of the Year and the Tanit d'Or for Best Documentary at Carthage Film Festival in 2010.

Company Profile

Les Films de Zayna was established in Paris in 2008 by Palestinian director and producer Raed Andoni and Palmyre Badinier in order to build close collaborations among writers, technicians and other talents, mainly from the Arab world and Europe. Beyond geography, its source of inspiration is openness to the world and diversity of sensitivities. Zayna's documentary filmography includes Nassim Amaouche's short film 'En terrain connu' (2013), which premiered at the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival; the collective project 'Family Albums' (Sameh Zoabi, Erige Sehiri, Mais Darwazeh, Nassim Amaouche; 2012) which had its premiere and won a special mention award at Cinemed; and Andoni's 'Fix Me' (2009), which won awards including a Golden Tanit in Carthage and the BAFICI Human Rights Award, and was named Best Documentary of the Year by SCAM in 2011. Zayna is currently producing Erige Sehiri's 'The Normal Way' and Andoni's 'Ghost Hunting'. Zayna has recently teamed up with Palestinian producers to develop Future Logic, a new platform for Palestinian cinema.

Development Grant
Feature Documentary
Fall 2015

Eliane Raheb
Director



Lara Abu Saifan
Producer



The Great Family

'Al A'ila Al Kubra' / Lebanon, France / Arabic

Runtime: 80 min
Genre: Creative Documentary

In 1976, at the age of four, Marlene was put up for adoption in Lebanon and raised in France. In delving into her past, she discovers she is a survivor of the massacre at the Tal Al Zaatar Palestinian refugee camp, and a family of survivors grows around her.



'The Great Family' follows the story of Marlene, a 43-year-old woman who was adopted from Lebanon by the French Gribaudo family in 1976 when she was four years old. As she investigates the traces of her identity, she discovers she is from the Tal Al Zaatar Palestinian refugee camp, which fell during the Lebanese Civil War. The camp is only kept alive through the testimonies of its survivors, who are scattered in Lebanon, Jordan, Germany, Norway and Sweden, and, even 40 years later, are unable to ingest the ugliness of what they lived on 12 August, 1976. As the film progresses, solid ties are built among Marlene and the survivors of Tal Al Zaatar, and they all become one great family.

Contact
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Director's Note

My journey in film has been accompanied by questions about war and identity. Thus, I often found myself in the position of mediator between characters in complex situations and their difficulties with confronting their buried or denied memories. The story of Marlene is a new chapter vis-à-vis these questions. Marlene is investigating the traces of her identity in the ruins of Tal Al Zaatar, a camp that has been wiped out and that is only kept alive through the testimonies of its survivors. Marlene's quest triggers revisiting the history of Tal Al Zaatar 40 years after its fall, portraying Marlene and her large family in their new reality, and reflecting on how human beings overcome the loss of their loved ones and find new meaning for life.

Director's Biography

Lebanese director **Eliane Raheb** has directed several short and medium-length films, which have won awards at various festivals and have been broadcast on ARTE/ZDF, Al Jazeera and NHK. 'Sleepless Nights' (2012), her first feature-length documentary, screened in more than 40 film festivals and was ranked fifth in 'Sight and Sound' magazine's listing of the best documentaries of 2013. Raheb is a founding member of Beirut DC, where she established the Beirut Cinema Days film festival. She has taught documentary filmmaking at the Université Saint-Joseph since 2003 and is currently a guest of the prestigious DAAD arts academy of Berlin.

Company Profile

Beirut DC is a Lebanese cultural association, created in 1999 by a group of filmmakers and arts advocates. The association's main activities are producing independent documentaries; organising capacity-building workshops with young Arab filmmakers; and staging the biennial Beirut Cinema Days film festival as well as several Arab film weeks in Europe and in the Arab world. Beirut DC's latest productions include 'Seeing the Self' (2015), 20 short videos by Syrian and Lebanese youngsters; and Bassem Fayyad's 'Diaries of a Flying Dog' (2014), Zeina Sfeir's 'All About My Father' (2010) and Simon Al Habre's 'The One-Man Village' (2008), three feature-length documentaries. In 2015, the association held the Beirut Cinema Platform, three days of meetings, training and pitching for 15 Arab producers and 25 industry experts.

Production Grant
Feature Documentary
Fall 2015

Lina Alabed
Director



Rami El Nihawi
Producer



Ibrahim

Jordan, Qatar / Arabic / 2017

Runtime: 90 min
Genre: Creative Documentary

'Ibrahim' looks at the story behind the disappearance of my father. I hope that by understanding the choices he made, I will be able to live with their impact on the way I make mine today.



Ibrahim Alabed, my father, was a secret member of the Revolutionary Council, a Palestinian militant organisation that was notorious for its intelligence affairs. When I was five years old, my father left for few days in his regular way. He never returned. I grew up in a house where silence was the usual atmosphere. My mother Najat, an Egyptian, had to continue her life normally, raising Ibrahim's five children in Damascus, always cursing her misfortune. This film uncovers the story behind the disappearance of Ibrahim Alabed, and I hope that by understanding the choices my father made, I will be able to live with the impact they have on the way I make mine today.

Contact
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Director's Note

In 1998, 12 years after my father's disappearance, an old neighbour in Damascus told us that my father had come back and asked about us. I remember how this visit brought up a lot of unsolved matters. Since then, my desire to trace my father has become stronger. In 2012, I obtained permission for the first time to visit Deir Abou Mishal, my father's native village, where I met members of his family. That time was magical enough to relieve the "refugee" feeling I have carried with me for my entire life, and it confronted me with new matters of identity. Today, I am aware how much my father's absence has affected my life and personality, and I feel that to understand my own choices in life, I have to dig around in some of my father's decisions.

Director's Biography

Lina Alabed is a Palestinian filmmaker. Born in 1980, she graduated from the Faculty of Journalism at Damascus University. Her graduation project was a short documentary that was broadcast on Al Jazeera in 2007. Her second short documentary, 'Noor Alhuda', produced by Al-Arabiya, was awarded the DOXBOX Jury Prize for Best Syrian Documentary Film in 2010. 'Damascus, My First Kiss' (2012) was her first feature-length documentary. Its international premiere took place at Doc Leipzig and it was broadcast on ARTE. Alabed's current project, 'Ibrahim', took the OIF Prize during the Beirut Cinema Platform in 2015.

Company Profile

SakADo was established in Beirut in 2011, with the intention of producing films that discuss the contemporary history of our region through the life stories of individuals. In 2012, 'Yamo', the company's first production, premiered in Visions du Réel, and has since been shown at several international festivals and venues. 'Damascus, My First Kiss' was produced later in 2012 and premiered at Doc Leipzig. It has screened in several festivals and venues and was broadcast on ARTE in 2013. Since its creation, SakADo has co-produced and supported several documentaries and short films, including Mohanad Yaqubi's 'Off Frame' (2013). The company is currently working on developing and producing Lina Alabed's feature-length documentary 'Ibrahim' and Bassam Chekhes's narrative feature 'To All Naked Men'.

Production Grant
Feature Documentary
Fall 2015

Mohamed El Amine Hattou
Director



**Costanza Bani, Fabian Diering,
Thomas Kaske**
Producer



Janitou

Algeria, Qatar / Arabic / 2017

Runtime: 85 min
Genre: Creative Documentary
Interests: Immigration, Social Issues

A journey to unravel love in past and contemporary Algeria by exploring the unique phenomenon of a Bollywood film that swept the country in the 1980s.



In Algeria in the mid-1980s, during a period of intense political and social unrest, the Bollywood film 'Janitou' became an unexpected overnight sensation throughout the country. It tells the timeless story of young lovers torn apart by the bigotry of their families and society at large. While the film has become lodged in Algerian popular culture, this documentary is a journey to unravel this unlikely but intimate connection between two distinct cultures, a truthful tribute to cinema, and an Algerian man's personal quest to discover what love and repression are in past and contemporary Algeria.

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Director's Note

In the mid-1980s, every Friday evening after prayers, the streets of the country were empty: everyone, including my family, was at home waiting for the Bollywood film to start. In one particular film, a little Indian boy tries to reunite his father and his mother. All Algerians fell in love with this boy, whom they called Janitou, a reference to the film's main theme song. Generations later, the film has become part of the collective Algerian memory. I believe 'Janitou' can raise important, unaddressed questions about Algeria. I want to use Janitou as a catalyst to discover what love and repression are in past and present Algeria, and illustrate the impact of cinema on society.

Director's Biography

Mohamed El Amine Hattou is an independent Algerian filmmaker. He graduated from the Journalism Institute of Algiers in 2000. In 2009, he was selected to take part in the documentary summer university of La Fémis, where he wrote and directed his first short documentary. In April 2011, he directed the short narrative film 'Down to Earth', which was selected for more than 20 film festivals around the world.

Company Profile

Molly Aida Film was founded in 2005 by producer Fabian Martin Diering. In 2013, Costanza Julia Bani joined the company, opening up to documentaries. Thomas Kaske came on board in 2015 as a junior producer. The company focuses on co-productions for feature-length documentary and narrative films, and also on service production for international film projects produced in Germany or with German participation, acting as a major or minor co-producer.

Post-Production Grant

Feature Documentary

Spring 2015

Aaron Kopp, Amanda Kopp

Director / Producer



Liyana

USA, Swaziland, Qatar / English / 2015

Runtime: 85 min

Genre: Creative Documentary

In Swaziland, a talented group of orphaned children creates a fictional heroine and send her on a dangerous quest.



Under the guidance of acclaimed storyteller Gcina Mhlophe, a group of talented young orphans begins a creative journey. They passionately tell the heroic story of Liyana, a young girl born of their imagination, who experiences tragedies similar to their own: abuse, hunger and the loss of their parents. As they send their heroine on a dangerous quest, the world that they imagine for her is brought to life in a ground breaking style of animated artwork. The decisions they make for Liyana provide unique insight into the children's perspective on life. As they lead their character through trials and temptations, they travel down their own path of self-discovery.

Director's Note

We have collaborated with our subjects to make the film that we most want to see. 'Liyana' is a lyrical documentary that gives our young storytellers the stage. Well-crafted stories of hope and triumph spoken from within are potent tools in enacting social change. We believe this film will play a crucial role in breaking stereotypes and challenging the prevalent, simplistic narrative of 'the orphan', and of Africans in general. A brave female lead gives both the children in the film and the audience a positive role model that will help to empower women and young people in the region and beyond. Ultimately, this film is a meditation on storytelling and an ode to the creative spirit.

Director's Biography

Aaron Kopp is an award-winning filmmaker and Emmy-nominated cinematographer who grew up in Swaziland. He shot and co-produced 'Saving Face' (2012), an Academy Award-winning documentary about acid attacks in Pakistan, and was also cinematographer for 'The Hunting Ground' (2015), a documentary about sexual assault on college campuses that had its premiere at Sundance. His short film 'Likhaya' (2009) won People's Choice and Best Documentary awards at international festivals. He has worked around the world on films for numerous television outlets, and was awarded a MacArthur Foundation grant for 'Liyana', his feature-length directorial debut.

Amanda Kopp is an award-winning photographer and artist. She was the producer and cinematographer for the short film 'Likhaya' (2009), which won a Golden Palm, and People's Choice and Best Documentary awards at international festivals. She also shot for 'The Hunting Ground', which premiered at Sundance in 2015. Kopp's work has been published in the UK, the USA, Sweden, Germany, Russia, Pakistan and Italy. Her photographs won the Grand Prize in the Photo District News Top Knots photography competition. She co-directed her first feature length documentary, 'Liyana', with funds from a MacArthur Foundation grant.

Company Profile

AJK Film is an independent film production company that specialises in international documentary films. Committed to making innovative, cinematic documentaries about the untold stories of heroes and heroines across Africa, the company is centred on the work of Aaron Kopp, an Emmy-nominated cinematographer and award-winning filmmaker who was raised in Swaziland and has worked on films around the globe. We believe well-crafted stories of hope and perseverance can be powerful tools in enacting social change, and that by enchanting viewers with compelling, beautiful characters it is possible to break down prejudice.

Contact

AJK Film

Aaron Kopp, Amanda Kopp

liyanafilm.com

Development Grant
Feature Documentary
Spring 2015

Boutheyna Bouslama
Director



Joëlle Bertossa
Producer



Seeking the Man with the Camera

'À la recherche de l'homme à la caméra' / Tunisia, Switzerland, France, Qatar / Arabic / 2017

Runtime: 80 min

Genre: Biography, Creative Documentary

Interests: Politics, War

An investigative documentary that follows the narrator as she seeks out Seymo, a childhood friend with whom she used to play in the streets of Homs.



'Seeking the Man with the Camera' follows the investigation led by director Boutheyna Bouslama as she seeks out Seymo, a childhood friend with whom she used to play in the streets of Homs. Today, Seymo has become Oussama Al Habbali, and he has been detained by the Syrian government since 2012 for his media activism. As she gets back in touch with several of her former playmates, Al Habbali's journey and his involvement in the Syrian revolution begin to come clear. To everyone, he has remained 'the man with the camera' - the only weapon he wielded in the midst of a harsh and politically complex conflict.

Contact

Close Up Films
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Director's Note

A quick glance is enough to recognise him. Twenty years later, I still see the eyes of the young boy with whom I used to play during my summers in Syria. One Spring day, chance took me to Istanbul to watch Talal Deriki's documentary 'The Return to Homs' (2013). On the big screen, I saw my friend Oussama filming Homs during the first days of what would become a revolution. I saw him survive a bombing and tend to his wounds in pain. I reached out to Syrians who are established in Turkey and asked them about Oussama to no avail. I met others and kept insisting on news from home. I learned that my old friend was probably held in a detention/torture centre in Homs. It was at this point that I decided to document my search for Oussama Al Habbali through a film. The time had come for me to grab the camera.

Director's Biography

A visual artist and filmmaker, **Boutheyna Bouslama** was born in Paris in 1982 to Tunisian parents. She grew up in Qatar and moved around the Middle East through places that deeply influenced her. Often, Bouslama places herself within her pieces: written texts, videos or installations in which she develops stories of womanhood and expatriation. Since studying Fine Arts in Geneva, she has been part of numerous exhibitions and has directed several short films.

Company Profile

Close Up Films is an independent production company based in Geneva. Not limited by genre, Close Up undertakes a wide range of fiction and documentary projects. Aspiring to reach a wide audience with projects that are demanding in both form and content, Close Up produces films from both young talents and established auteurs. Our films strive to question society and expand viewpoints on cinema and the world, and we choose to work on projects with international appeal, collaborating regularly with foreign partners.

Post-Production Grant
Feature Documentary
Fall 2015

Lokman Slim
Director



Monika Borgmann
Director / Producer



Tadmor

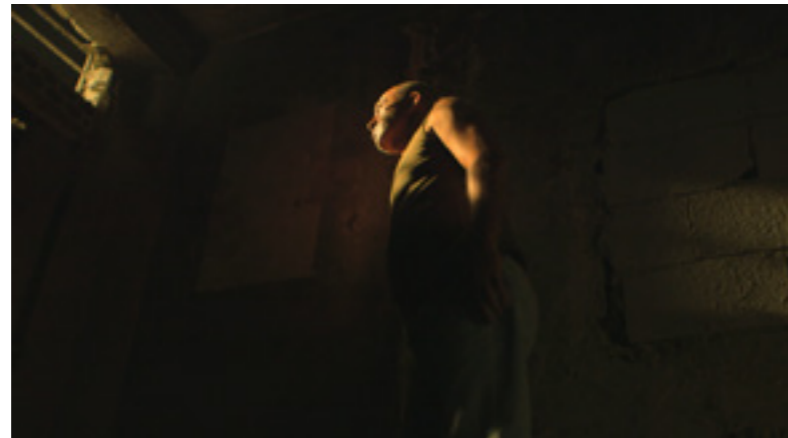
Lebanon, Qatar / Arabic / 2016

Runtime: 100 min

Genre: Biography, Creative Documentary,

Interests: History, Politics, Psychology

A group of Lebanese men re-enact the ordeals they experienced as detainees in Syria's notorious Tadmor prison. An ode to the human will to survive.



Raymond. Youssef. Ali. Saad. Moussa. Rashid. Mahmoud. Elias. Individuals. Together. The Lebanese men in this film were incarcerated in Syria during their country's civil war. All were banished to the notorious Tadmor Prison, where they suffered the same fate as countless Syrians. Words alone cannot describe the cruelty of the hell these men survived: torture, suffering, fear, contempt and humiliation. In an extraordinary endeavour of artistic collaboration, they decide to recreate that diabolical place, so as not merely to re-enact, but rather to relive key scenes from their abysmal experience. By showing us the unspeakable, they bring us a step closer to understanding the incomprehensible. Their individual will to survive and their collective capacity for survival is what 'Tadmor' is about. It is a testimony to each man's will to live.

Contact

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Directors' Note

How does one live with the traces of evil that remain in the body, the mind and the memory, and in the way of seeing and understanding the world? 'Tadmor' began in 2008 when we met with a group of men who had returned from Syrian prisons, overcome the taboo of their incarceration, and wanted to speak about their ordeals. Over time, what had begun as a therapeutic encounter became an artistic endeavour, involving testimony and acting out. In Beirut, in 2012, we presented a live performance with these men, entitled 'One Day in Hell'. It was so compelling that we were invited to present it in several German cities in May of 2013. After working on this performance, the men were ready to participate in the film, which centres on the broad range of emotions they experienced during their imprisonment. They guided us in making this film, and we followed.

Director's Biography

Lokman Slim was born in Lebanon. He studied Philosophy and Ancient Languages at the Sorbonne. In 1988, he returned to Lebanon, where he founded the publishing house Dar Al-Jadeed. In 2001, Slim and Monika Borgmann founded UMAM Productions, which produced or co-produced mainly documentaries. With Borgmann, Slim authored and directed the documentary 'Massaker' (2005), a portrait of six perpetrators of the infamous Sabra and Shatila massacres in Lebanon (1982). The film was selected for more than 50 film festivals, received several awards, and was released in cinemas in France, Switzerland and Greece.

Born in Germany, **Monika Borgmann** studied Arab Philology and Political Science in Bonn and Damascus. She worked with the German radio and press outlets ARD and Die Zeit from 1990 to 2001 as a freelance journalist. She is multilingual, which is fundamental to her dual Lebanese-German citizenship. Along with Lokman Slim, she co-founded UMAM Productions in 2001. Together, they wrote and directed 'Massaker' (2005), a documentary that portrays six perpetrators associated with the infamous Sabra and Shatila massacres that occurred during the Lebanese Civil War. The film was selected for more than 50 festivals and received several awards.

Company Profile

UMAM Productions was founded in 2001 by Monika Borgmann and Lokman Slim. Its first film release was their award-winning documentary 'Massaker' (2005), which interrogates six members of the Lebanese Phalange militia, perpetrators of the notorious Sabra and Shatila massacre of 1982. Since then, UMAM Productions has produced or co-produced a number of documentaries that consider the issue of memorialising the past, not only of Lebanon, but also of countries throughout the MENA region. The company is associated with UMAM Documentation & Research, a Beirut-based NGO that archives and exhibits material related to the Lebanese civil wars.

Production Grant
Feature Documentary
Fall 2015

Hamida Issa
Director



Justin Kramer
Producer



To the Ends of the Earth

Qatar / Arabic, English / 2017

Runtime: 97 min

Genre: Poetic Documentary

Interests: Environment

A Qatari woman travels on an environmental expedition to Antarctica in search of hope, before returning to the Gulf and finding unity and inspiration for positive change.



The story of 'To the Ends of the Earth' begins in Argentina and follows an environmental expedition to Antarctica, exploring the hope 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 and those who are united in their 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.

Contact

The Film House
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Director's Note

I will never forget praying in the serene silence on the ice in Antarctica. Was I the first person to pray on that piece of ice? That fascinating question fills me with a sense of responsibility to honour that land, our land, my land – and to do something beneficial with my experiences. In Islam, human beings are described as the Khalifas, the caretakers of our world. The way we treat ourselves, the people around us and our Earth is our ultimate test. This film will act as a reminder of that test, and hopefully inspire action no matter how small. I want this film to be a vehicle for change, not only within myself, but also for my society and the world.

Director's Biography

Hamida Issa is a Qatari director, writer and producer. She graduated with a BA in Politics from University College London and an 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 is the first Qatari woman in history to step foot on Antarctica and is currently making her first feature-length documentary, 'To the Ends of the Earth', 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 Grant
Feature Documentary
Fall 2015

Hind Bensari
Director



Habib Attia
Producer



Weight Throwers

'Rami Ethiqal' / Morocco, Qatar / Arabic / 2017

Runtime: 80 min

Genre: Creative Documentary

Interests: Identity, Social Issues, Sports

'Weight Throwers' follows the struggles of Azzedine and Youssef, both jobless and disabled, as they strive to gain a dignified life in Morocco by participating in the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.



Spanning over two years, during the run-up to the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Paralympic Games, 'Weight Throwers' follows the struggles of young, disabled Moroccans who believe they must conquer the extraordinary to finally become ordinary at home. When Azzedine broke the shot-put world record at the 2012 Games in London, he thought his life was about to change. Back home, however, he was immediately forgotten by the national government. Nevertheless, he became an inspiration for other hopeful athletes like him, who now also aim to reach Rio despite their lack of formal training.

Director's Note

I feel strongly about making 'Weight Throwers' because the sports framework allows for stunning visual material, whether during training sessions or competitions; but more importantly, Azzedine and Youssef's stories encapsulate a much deeper questioning of our relationship with society, when one is placed at the bottom of the social ladder due to one's physical or mental difference. My subjects are struggling to build a life outside the prison of no expectations that society built for them - but they are not fighting society, they are longing to feel part of it. I want to accompany a young generation of men who have never been given a voice on their journey toward accepting themselves and being treated with dignity.

Director's Biography

Born in Casablanca, **Hind Bensari** grew up in London before quitting her job in an investment fund to move back to Morocco to produce and direct her first documentary, '475: Break the Silence' (2014). Entirely crowd-funded, the film became an Internet sensation and won critical acclaim from 'The New York Times' and ARD, Germany's first television channel. It broke audience records at 2M TV, and has been distributed on channels worldwide including DR2 (Denmark), SIC Portugal and Planète Canada. A TEDx speaker, Bensari graduated with a degree in Economics and Middle-Eastern Studies from Edinburgh University and holds a certificate in International Political Economy from the London School of Economics.

Company Profile

Since 1983, **Cinétéléfilms** has been a leading production company in Tunisia and the Arab world. After having produced some of the biggest blockbusters in Tunisian and Arab cinema, such as Nouri Bouzid's 'Man of Ashes' (1986), Moufida Tlatli's 'The Silences of the Palace' (1994) and Férid Boughedir's 'Halfaouine: Child of the Terraces' (1990), the company extended its productions to television series, documentaries and drama. Over the last few years, Cinétéléfilms has developed a large network of partners around the world, mainly in the Arab countries, Europe and Africa.

Contact

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Post-Production Grant
Feature Documentary
Fall 2015

Heidi Brandenburg,
Matthew Ortel
Director



Taira Akbar
Producer / Screenwriter



Contact
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When Two Worlds Collide

'Cuando dos mundos chocan' / Peru, Qatar / Spanish / 2016

Runtime: 100 min

Genre: Biography

Interests: Environment, History, Politics, Social Issues

A story of a man and a people, and of the fate of one of our planet's most valuable natural resources – the Amazon rainforest.



'When Two Worlds Collide' traces the epic journey of Alberto Pizango, an indigenous leader facing lifetime imprisonment for protecting the Peruvian Amazon. When he fights new legislation that has opened up his rainforest home to destruction, Pizango's supporters trigger the largest indigenous protests in Peruvian history. Tragically, this ends in the deaths of both natives and police officers. Pizango was held responsible for the deaths despite the fact that he was in no way involved, and forced into exile. He finally returns to fight for his people and their way of life. The film trails the guilty parties on both sides of the battle as despotic decisions by government, political power plays and the tragedy of destroyed families tell a tale of paradise in peril. Ultimately, the audience is left to grapple with the facts and judge the truth for themselves.

Director's Note

We began collaborating on films while we were studying at the University of Newport, Wales. After graduating, we decided to continue our collaboration and asked Taira Akbar, a talented artist then working for the BBC, to join our team. Together we created a production company called Yachaywasi Films, which translates to "house of learning". Our vision was to use documentary film as a tool for building knowledge, through which the company would become that house of learning. In 2007, we earned a scholarship that allowed us to make films anywhere in the world, and our sights turned to South America. Since Heidi was born and raised in Peru and wanted to return to the country she had left behind, we made Lima our next destination. This is where we created 'When Two Worlds Collide'.

Director's Biography

Heidi Brandenburg is a passionate observer of human nature and our environment. She co-founded Yachaywasi Films to explore social and environmental issues and challenge audiences to rethink preconceptions. Her first feature-length film, 'When Two Worlds Collide', expands on the signature character-driven style she developed in 'Don Silva' and 'Sonnemann' (both 2006). Brandenburg graduated with honours from the University of Wales. Born in Paraguay and raised in Peru and Germany, she now lives in Washington, DC.

Mathew Orzel is a documentary director and visual artist whose work focuses on the complexities of human relationships. He worked as a sound designer, editor and director in short filmmaking before co-founding Yachaywasi Films with the goal of representing social-justice and environmental issues. Orzel graduated with honours in with a degree in Visual Communication from the University of Wales. 'When Two Worlds Collide' is his first feature-length documentary.

Company Profile

Yachaywasi Films aims to provide thought-provoking and innovative documentary films that explore world issues while pushing the boundaries of how documentary films are made and perceived. By fusing artistic, cinematic and commercial principles, Yachaywasi Films is solidifying a novel documentary style. We communicate ideas to an expanding market, ranging from art-house cinema to mainstream television.

Post-Production Grant
Feature Experimental or Essay
Spring 2015

Hassen Ferhani
Director



Narimane Mari
Producer

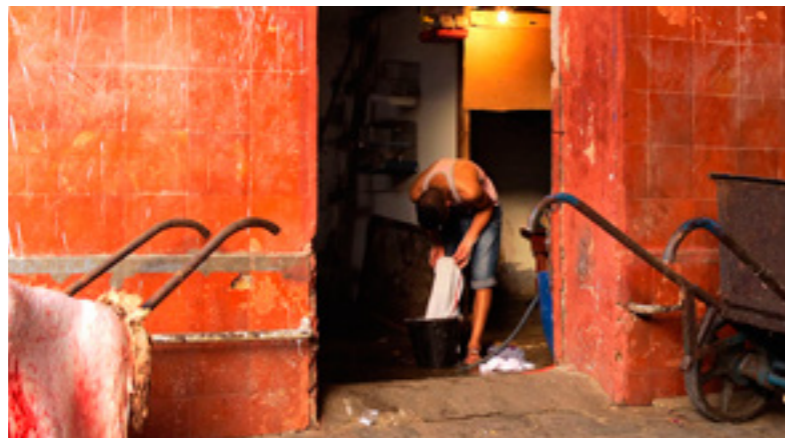


Roundabout in My Head

'Dans ma tête, un rond-point' / Algeria, France, Qatar / Arabic / 2015

Runtime: 100 min
Genre: Creative Documentary

The old slaughterhouse of Algiers is a veritable theatre of humanity, at once closed and open to the outside world. It embodies a strong moment of Algeria's history, and is part and parcel of the universality of man.



In the largest slaughterhouse in Algiers, men live and work close to the throbbing rhythms of their tasks and dreams. Hope, bitterness, love, paradise, hell and stories of football are set to the Chaabi and Rai melodies that permeate their world.

Director's Note

For this documentary essay, I use the camera as a seismograph. It allows me to feel ground movements, the heartbeats of a place, the pulse of the people who occupy it. I can tune into the rhythm of those who are present. Over the film's sequences, I am committed to specific characters, as snippets of their lives reoccur as stories that never end. As I travel through spaces, my film becomes a mosaic. I am not seeking completeness; rather, by listening to experiences I will come up with a partial – and inevitably biased – picture of a fragment of contemporary Algeria.

Director's Biography

Hassen Ferhani was born in Algiers. In 2006, he directed his first short film, 'Les Baies d'Alger', which was selected for the official competitions of numerous international film festivals. In 2008, he participated in a documentary workshop at La Fémis, where he directed the short film 'Le Vol du 140'. In 2010, he co-directed the documentary 'Afric Hotel', which screened at Visions du Réel and FIDMarseille. 'Tarzan, Don Quixote and Us' (2013), a short film between fantasy and documentary has been shown in many international festivals. 'Roundabout in My Head' (2015), his first feature-length film, received the Grand Prix at FIDMarseille, the Prix de Documentaire sur Grand Écran at the Amiens International Film Festival, the Internazionale.doc Best Film award at the Torino Film Festival, two Golden Tanits at the Carthage Film Festival, the IDFA Special Jury Award for First Appearance and both the CAMIRA award and the Audience Feature Film Award at the Entrevues Belfort International Film Festival.

Company Profile

Aller 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..

Contact

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Short Narrative

[Aya](#)

[Behind the Wall](#)

[The Boss](#)

[Kashta](#)

[Language](#)

[One of Them](#)

[Under the Hat](#)

Short Narrative

[The Most Pretty Dudes](#)

Production Grant

Short Narrative

Spring 2015

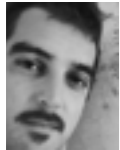
Moufida Fedhila

Director / Screenwriter



Antonio Magilano

Producer



Aya

Tunisia, France, Qatar / Arabic, French / 2016

Runtime: 20 min

Genre: Drama

Interests: Coming of age, Identity, Immigration, Psychology, Social Issues, Women's Issues, Youth

'Aya' is a story about faith in God and in humanity, and of making changes and sacrifices in order to save one's soul.



Seven-year-old Aya lives in an inner-city neighbourhood of Marseille. Intelligent and obsessed with drawing, Aya is very close to her mother Meriem, a French convert to Islam. Her father Youssef, torn between his love for his wife and his fear of being banished from the Salafi community of which he is a member, feels he has no choice but to force Meriem to wear a niqab. One day, an unexpected turn of events disrupts the life of this fragile family.

Director's Note

'Aya' is a questioning of love and faith. Its characters, despite their inner conflict, their pain, their disorders in various forms, are trying to assume their lives and their being. Yet on the surface nothing seems to develop. Emotion flows from their bodies, without ever breaking through. It is also a film about childhood, which can resurrect the world through its every gaze. Through her playful vision, the child discovers life and is able to integrate it to her games. Oscillating between fantasy and dream, she has power over time and death. 'Aya' is also a film about the intimate and painful process that is the first step towards self-emancipation. I want this film to be both realistic and poetic, so that every scene strengthens the perception of the different worlds in which the characters live and survive.

Director's Biography

Moufida Fedhila, a graduate of the European School of Art in Brittany, studied Philosophy at the Sorbonne before studying Filmmaking in Paris. She is a screenwriter, director and visual artist. Fedhila's work has been shown in numerous solo and collective exhibitions, and she has worked as assistant director on several French and international projects, such as 'Li-La' (2012) and 'The Jews of Egypt' (2013). She has also made experimental films that have been screened in several European galleries and selected for film festivals. Fedhila was a jury member at the second edition of the Francophone Trophies. 'Offside', her most recent film, was named Best Documentary Short Film at the fourth Annual Meeting of Tunisian Filmmakers in 2015. She is currently preparing her next film in Marseille.

Company Profile

Appel d'air Films is a production company that was established in Marseille to create, support, produce and launch innovative audiovisual projects around the Euro-Mediterranean region. Appel d'air focuses on developing and producing feature-length fiction and documentary films without regard to any limitations of form, length or technology. The company aims to develop formats for innovative storytelling on new screens (web, tablet and mobile), and to expand audiences for traditional screens through bimedia and transmedia with strong and distinctive outstanding editorial content.

Contact

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Production Grant

Short Narrative

Fall 2015

Karima Zoubir

Director / Screenwriter / Producer



Behind the Wall

'War'a Al Jidar' / Morocco, Qatar / Arabic / 2016

Runtime: 20 min

Genre: Based on a True Story, Drama

Interests: Children, Social Issues

Nadia, a little girl, lives in a Casablanca slum that is surrounded by a wall. One day, the municipality begins to paint the structure – but why this sudden interest?



'Behind the Wall' is the story of Nadia, an over-protected five-year-old girl who lives in a Casablanca slum separated from the rest of the city by the wall that surrounds it. She is about to start attending school, which proves to be an upheaval for her parents, and especially for Souad, her mother. Souad remains calm as long as Nadia stays within the shantytown walls, but her serenity evaporates once Nadia transcends the slum's borders. Then one day, the municipality starts painting this wall. Why this sudden interest?

Director's Note

In 'Behind the Wall', the glance of five-year-old Nadia prevails; it is she, full of innocence, who scrutinises the society in which she lives. We discover how this society is fragmented and compartmentalised by walls. There is the wall surrounding the slum, which marginalises and excludes a segment of the population. Built by Moroccan authorities, it is whitened whenever a dignitary visits, providing the illusion that this wall is not the marker of a ghetto. In this film, the wall is also the symbol of the outside world. To go to work or to school is a daily death threat, and Nadia's parents must struggle and remain vigilant to keep their daughter from facing such a brutal and unmerciful reality. If the wall stigmatises poverty, it does the same for extreme wealth.

Director's Biography

Karima Zoubir has worked as a freelance documentary filmmaker and script supervisor since graduating cum laude in 2005 from the Audiovisual Department of Casablanca University. In November, 2005, she attended her first filmmaking master class at the Marrakech/Tribeca Filmmakers Exchange given by Martin Scorsese and Abbas Kiarostami. Over the past few years, she participated in film workshops including the Berlinale Talent Campus, Beirut DC and ARTE's Two Sides of the Coin, and Access. She was also invited to markets such as Medimed and the Durban FilmMart with her project 'Camera/Woman' (2012).

Company Profile

Les Films de Demain is a young and ambitious independent production company based in Casablanca. Dedicated to producing creative documentaries and narrative films on the basis of originality and strong personal vision, the company's films tackle subjects that focus on issues of human rights and social justice. The company's aim is to develop stories on topical questions and timeless subjects, and films that are carefully researched and that rigorously explore their subject matter, that are audacious, open to the diversity of the world and that have their place on the international scene – films that question the world and propose new ways of looking at it. Films that keep us from closing our eyes. We want to make films that tell us something about who we are as humans, and about the large and small things in life that affect us.

Contact

Les Films de Demain

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Production Grant

Short Narrative

Spring 2015

Rzgar Huseein Ahmed

Director / Screenwriter



Yussif Hussein Ebdoula

Producer



The Boss

'Reis' / Iraq, UAE, Qatar / Kurdish / 2015

Runtime: 20 min

Genre: Drama

Interests: Children

A group of boys decides to select a boss from among themselves. Then the boss becomes the group's dictator.



Five boys from a small village lose their football field and swimming pool to the Tigers, a gang of boys from another village who occupy the territory by force. The five decide to choose a boss to run their group, face the Tigers and fight for their rights. After selecting Hasso to be their boss, the group becomes stronger and tighter. They fight the Tigers and get back their field and swimming pool. Hasso, however, is spoiled by the authority he holds, and becomes the group's dictator. Over time, he begins to mistreat his comrades, so that eventually the group collapses and returns to its former weak state.

Director's Note

'The Boss' reflects the collapse of several dictatorships that has occurred over the few past years in the Middle East. Interestingly, it is the same people - us - who applauded during these presidencies who generated the revolutions that brought the dictators down. Then, we elected other individuals who turned out to be unsatisfactory, and so we rebelled yet again. I have asked myself why this cyclical story happens so frequently in the Middle East, and that is how I chose the main character of this film. At first, Hasso appears to be the "servant" of the group, but through a simple game - one based not on reason, but on luck - the same group elects him leader. I want to show that in the Middle East, instead of choosing our leaders and our approach to life based on reason, rather we put our trust in destiny, fortune and apathy.

Director's Biography

An Iraqi national, **Rzgar Huseein Ahmed** was born in Iran in 1979 and studied cinema for one year at the Law Filmmakers Society in Mahabad. He also attended courses in the television industry in the Netherlands, and a course in documentary filmmaking at the French Institute in Suleimani.

Company Profile

Visual K Productions was created in 2006 by a group of filmmakers in northern Iraqi Kurdistan who wanted to combine their experience and lay the foundations of a cinema industry that could embrace innovations in filmmaking. Based in the Kurdish capital of Erbil, the company is dedicated to the production and promotion of Iraqi cinema, and its expansion into the international market. The Visual K crew has worked on eight 35mm and 12 HD feature-film productions, and nearly 30 music videos and commercials that were shot in the region with local and international cast and crew.

Contact

Rzgar Huseein Ahmed

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Production Grant

Short Narrative

Fall 2015

A.J. Al Thani

Director / Screenwriter



Jaime Siordia

Producer



Kashta

Qatar / Arabic / 2016

Genre: Action, Drama

Some accidents can't be fixed.



A father takes his two sons out on a trip to the desert to go hunting, but the results are not quite what he was expecting.

Director's Note

This project is a film I've been wanting to make for a long time and I am very happy and lucky to finally be doing it. I think we can all be tough on our siblings from time to time, and to see how putting aside differences by working together to solve a problem, and exploring the different layers of these characters to make them be compelling and work together was the most fun I've had working on any project to date.

Director's Biography

A.J. Al-Thani is a Qatar-born filmmaker. Her love for movies and moviemaking began at the age of six when she saw 'Star Wars' (1977) in the cinema in 1999. She began to pursue her dream of being a filmmaker with the launch of the Doha Film Institute. Al-Thani's relationship with the Institute began in 2010 when she participated in one of its first film workshops, which opened the door for many local filmmakers to pursue their passion. For almost six years Al-Thani has been developing her skills with the help of the Institute. She is now working on her first professional short film through a grant from the Institute.

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.

Contact

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Production Grant

Short Narrative

Fall 2015

Mortada Gzar

Director / Screenwriter / Producer



Language

Iraq, Qatar / Arabic / 2016

Runtime: 29 min

Genre: Animation, Fantasy

An elderly blind man walks through the streets of Baghdad, then falls asleep while reading a book in Braille. When he wakes up, he finds he has become a giant and reads the devastation of the city by touch.



An elderly blind man walks through the streets of Baghdad, making his way with his white cane, and falls asleep on the roof of his house. When he wakes up, his body has grown as huge as a giant's, but he does not recognise the change in his size because he cannot see. Used to reading books in Braille, he now reads the scars of his bombarded city.

Director's Note

'Language' is adopted from my novel 'My Beautiful Sect'. A blind man is distressed by the destruction that has taken place in his country and tries to understand why it is happening. He once knew Baghdad very well, and in his mind he has saved only beautiful childhood memories. After he lost his sight, he began to read Braille and experience the world through touch. He has come to believe in the possibility of communicating with destruction and those responsible for it - a dialogue in visually impaired language. Then, like a superhero in a comic book, he becomes a giant. He sums up his daily conversation with friends and family, finding more questions than answers in a situation in which it is the normally peaceful people who find themselves burdened with the fallout of war.

Director's Biography

Mortada Gzar is an Iraqi novelist. His published novels include 'Paradise Broom' (2008) and 'Mr. Asgar & Akbar' (2011). 'God, Forgive Nadima!', his first short film, screened in competition at the Dubai International Film Festival in 2014.

Contact

Mortada Gzar

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Production Grant
Short Narrative
Spring 2015

Fahad Al Kuwari
Director / Screenwriter



Mary Bugg
Producer



One of Them

'Wahad Menhum' / Qatar / Arabic / 2016

Runtime: 15 min
Genre: Comedy

Khalid finds himself in an enigmatic situation when he suddenly develops a very inconvenient hearing problem.



During Friday prayers, Khalid notices that the khutbah does not start as early as usual. His friend Ahmad tells him to stop talking and pay attention to the imam. Puzzled, Khalid looks toward the minbar, only to realise that the imam is indeed preaching – but Khalid cannot hear him. He also notices the strange appearance of the imam, who is wearing a brown paper bag with a red smile drawn on it. Confused, Khalid asks his friend for an explanation. Ahmad is worried and advises Khalid to see a doctor, fearing he has become “one of them”. Khalid sees a doctor who proves unhelpful, so Ahmad suggests that Khalid wear a similar paper bag on his head as a solution. When he puts the bag on, Khalid is able to hear the khutbah, and soon he blends in with a crowd of bag-wearers.

Contact

Innovation Films
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This film explores themes that are not only relevant, but also important to the socio-political status of the Gulf region. The social norms of our society are defined primarily by religion, which is meticulously woven into our politics, arts and traditions; it is the way we represent ourselves. Let us examine the way Islam is currently being perceived by the world – it is seen by some as a religion of violence, fear and terrorism. Why do so many see Muslims from that perspective, when Islam promotes peace, love and acceptance? The style of 'One of Them' relies heavily on visual comedy; as the subject matter is very sensitive, treating it through a serious dramatic structure would add fuel to the fire. I do not want this film to spark religious debate; rather, I simply want to shed light on a timely topic within a sarcastic, almost cartoonish template.

Fahad Al Kuwari is an independent filmmaker. Born and raised in Qatar, he comes from an art and design background and has a BA in Fine Arts from Virginia Commonwealth University. He started his career in film as a production designer, and draws his inspiration from Sergio Leone, Akira Kurosawa and Satyajit Ray. Al Kuwari has worked on several short films including 'Ghazel' (2012) and Ali Al Anssari's 'Qarar' (2014). He also wrote and directed 'Ruqya' (2011) and wrote Al Anssari's 'I' (2013). His first participation in a feature film was on the set of Mira Nair's 'The Reluctant Fundamentalist' (2012).

Innovation Films is a film and television production company whose main vision is to create a solid film industry that exports world-class filmmaking. Past productions include the feature film 'Lockdown: Red Moon Escape', as well as several successful short films; the company also co-produced the American indie title 'KillCam'. Innovation prides itself on creating and nurturing local talent, both in front of and behind the camera, and most crew members working with Innovation are local film professionals or trainees. We actively contribute to local expertise by having interns shadow industry professionals on set and placing trainees on commercials and short and feature films. Innovation also conducts scriptwriting, producing and directing classes, and weekly acting workshops overseen by Academy Award nominee Scandar Copti.

Production Grant
Short Narrative
Spring 2015

Amal Al-Agroobi
Director / Producer



Yousef Ibrahim
Screenwriter



Under the Hat

'Taht Al Amama' / UAE, Qatar / Arabic / 2016

Runtime: 15 min
Genre: Comedy, Drama

When a mosque prayer caller's voice begins to fail him, he looks for a replacement in his neighbour, a musician in a heavy metal band.



'Under the Hat' tells the story of Sheikh Abdul Kareem, an Egyptian mosque prayer caller on the brink of retirement, who lives in a house by the mosque with his wife Noor. When his voice begins to fail and the ministry threatens to send him home, his desperate wife invites their young, reckless Emirati neighbour Badr to take over from her husband. The adventure begins when Badr and the Sheikh meet; two very different people with two very different backgrounds who must learn to get along in order to get what they want.

Contact

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Director's Note

'Under the Hat' tells the story of two opposing characters and, by extension, two different worlds. Can the realms of religion and musical expression be married? I want to create a story about the value of respect in the face of difference - especially in this time when the world experiences such prejudice and misunderstanding. I wanted the cinematography to mirror these opposing characters through colour schemes and studied technical shots. The story came to me when I moved into a new home and unknowingly planted myself by a mosque whose prayer caller had a horrible voice. I thought how interesting would it be if he were replaced by someone unexpected: a heavy-metal guitar-playing teen. The screenwriter kept the characters fresh and the actors put soul into their personalities - we no longer want to hear stories about oppressed women and ego-driven men; see Arabian deserts or heavy plays on symbolism. We wanted to create a different story from the Arab world and so we did.

Director's Biography

Amal Al-Agroobi began a career in the sciences before joining the film industry in 2012 as a director and producer. In 2012, she completed her first short documentary, 'Half Emirati', which discusses the social implications of being a mixed-race child in the UAE. In 2013, she premiered the award-winning feature-length documentary 'The Brain that Sings' (2013), which also discusses social issues in the Arab region, this time targeting autism and special needs. 'Under the Hat' is her first fiction film.

Company Profile

Established in 2013, **Al Agroobi Films** is a production house based in the UAE. Committed to making high-quality fiction and documentary films that are appealing to both national and international audiences, the company believes it will contribute to the growing Arab film industry by sharing unique, authentic and creative stories. After the success of Amal Al-Agroobi's 'The Brain that Sings', which won the People's Choice Award at the Dubai International Film Festival in 2013, Al Agroobi Films is becoming known as one of the fastest-growing production companies in the UAE with projects in development. The company's work has also won awards at the Aljazeera International Documentary Film Festival and the Giffoni Film Festival among others. Al Agroobi Films also has also secured international distribution deals for television in the USA, Europe and the Middle East, and runs pop-up screening events at schools, universities and companies all over the GCC region.

Production Grant

Short Narrative

Fall 2015

Hend Fakhroo

Director / Screenwriter



Patricia Donohue

Screenwriter / Producer



The Waiting Room

'Ghorfat Al Intithar' / Qatar / Arabic, English

Genre: Drama

Interests: Family, Friendship

An Arab family and a Western family find themselves sharing a hospital room; the only thing that separates them is a curtain.



Two families from different backgrounds find themselves sharing a room in an intensive care unit. Separated by a thin curtain, two young women find they have the same hopes and struggles as each deals with the illness of a parent. Through the monotony of hospital routine and emotional roller-coaster ride, the women forge an unusual friendship.

Director's Note

I spent a lot of time in hospital rooms when my father was waiting for a double transplant. As I watched the people around me, I realised our experiences are similar, regardless of our background. Whether it's sorrow or relief, the emotions found in hospitals transcend culture. Patricia Donohue, the film's co-writer, also spent a lot of time in hospitals dealing with her mother's health issues. We talked about how the people you meet can become so close to you for a brief period of time. You see the real relationships between the patients and their families; the raw reactions to bad news. You also find humour in the little things. 'The Waiting Room' is based on real-life events, which have been combined to create this story.

Director's Biography

Hend Fakhroo is a Qatari writer and director. Her first short film, 'His Name' (2012), was screened at festivals around the world, including the Short Film Corner at the Festival de Cannes, the Doha Tribeca Film Festival and the River Film Festival. Fakhroo grew up heavily influenced by her Egyptian grandfather, Mohamed Tawfiq, an acclaimed actor and director. She started making films in 2003 while attending university in Austin, Texas, and started her own production company, Certifiable Productions, in 2013. She is currently developing two feature films with a focus on bridging the gap between Arab films and international audiences.

Company Profile

Certifiable Productions was established in 2013 and is based in Doha. The company's aim is to provide a platform for local and regional filmmakers to develop their projects. It is currently involved in the pre-production of a reality-TV series, a short film and a feature-length film. Certifiable Productions is owned by Qatari filmmaker Hend Fakhroo, and currently employs people on a freelance basis.

Contact

Certifiable Productions

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Production Grant

Short Experimental or Essay
Spring 2015

Mohammad Dibo

Director



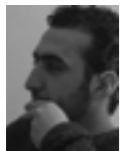
Rasha Abbas

Screenwriter



Omar Khito

Producer



The Most Pretty Dudes

Syria, Qatar / Arabic / 2016

Runtime: 20 min

Genre: Animation, Docufiction

Interests: War

In Homs, a city destroyed by war, two embattled groups negotiate to ensure their safe escape from the building they are both trapped in.



'The Most Pretty Dudes' is based on an audio recording of negotiations between two groups, one representing the Syrian regime, the other the Free Syrian Army, which took place in Homs in February, 2012. Both groups are trapped in the same building, both with the same desire: to get out of the building alive. The recording demonstrates how the negotiations began from a place of mistrust, as the leader of the regime soldiers asks the FSA leader to get in touch with a neutral outsider to guarantee the safety of all. In the end, the men reach an agreement whose terms mean that trusting in one another is the only way to survive, their word of honour the only guarantee of their true intentions.

Contact

Alshare3
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Director's Note

The first time I listened to the recording of this negotiation, it seemed like a comedy. The belligerents have arrived to do battle – and to kill one another if necessary – yet now they speak in polite tones, a reflection of their fear. After I finished listening, however, the events seemed more dramatic. Both sides found themselves in a very delicate situation, one where the outcome of their dialogue would determine their immediate fate. They were all placed at the same distance from death, which opened their eyes to hidden facts – a confrontation that brought them to rethink their motives and who the enemy is. For the first time in years, they were actually listening to each other. The solution that the whole world has been seeking for five years was right there in a destroyed building during a genuine moment of honesty among fighters.

Director's Biography

Born in 1984, **Mohammad Dibo** graduated from the department of acting in the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts in Damascus in 2012. In 2011, he acted in Samuel Beckett's 'Ohio Impromptu' with the Damascus Theatre Laboratory, and he has acted in numerous plays with the National Theatre in Damascus. He was assistant director on some music video clips, including Gene Band's 'Ya Waladi' (2010), and 'We Are Coming to Slaughter You' (2012). While living in Beirut, Dibo directed the video piece 'Happiness & Bliss', which was produced by Bidayyat in 2012.

Company Profile

A Syrian non-profit media foundation licensed in France, **Alshare3** works on media projects and activities inside and outside Syria to defend the freedom of the media. It was founded in 2010 with a media campaign to support those who were displaced from the northeastern farmlands of Syria as a result of drought. The campaign developed to include activities such as photography exhibits and visits to drought camps for journalists. When the Syrian popular uprising began in 2011, Alshare3 began to document the events. Working with the Syrian, Arab and international media, we attempt to provide clear and comprehensive coverage due to the urgent necessity of understanding the complexity of the events, particularly given the ruling regime's siege on the media. Through partnerships with Syrian and international civil associations, Alshare3 trains activists inside Syria and organises developmental and cultural projects and events, including annual music and film shows, art galleries and works in public squares.

