

مهرجان عمان السينمائي الدولي Amman International Film Festival ——— أوّل فيلم Awal Film _____

Amman Film Industry Days



Table of Content

Welcome Note by Princess Rym Ali	3
About the Amman International Film Festival	4
Introduction to Amman Film Industry Days (AFID)	5
AFID Jury	8
AFID Experts	15
AFID pitching platforms	20
AFID Sessions & Workshops	51



Welcome Note

If there is one programme within the Amman International Film Festival – Awal Film that fits "par excellence" within the enabling environment that Jordan has sought to create for filmmakers, it is definitely the Amman Film Industry Days.

Many of you are familiar with the many programmes developed by the Royal Film Commission-Jordan, our main sponsor for this festival, and the institution that gave birth to it. The Amman Film Industry Days is the natural product of years of hard work and building experience to bring talents from Jordan and the Arab world together to create, write, produce and direct, and most of all, exchange, learn and grow.

This year's mostly virtual Industry Film Days Programme welcomes cinema professionals to seminars, pitching sessions and talks, which we hope will stimulate aspiring filmmakers in Jordan and the region. The selected projects include an impressive line-up of scripts and stories for our pitching platforms, and we have a rich selection of filmmakers, artists, producers, all of whom are eager to tap into the talent that exists in our region and help it thrive.

Today's audiences are truly diverse, even within a single country, not to mention globally, and there is so much thirst for more stories that will help us escape at times, or at times recognize certain realities, as well as better understand one another.

The demand for content in the world generally speaking and the demand for content from the Arab world more specifically are opportunities that we should seize, to make sure there is an Arab narrative alongside the other narratives that exist everywhere.

So it is with a sense of purpose and almost a sense of urgency that we have pulled all the resources we could together, in order to make sure all your voices are heard.

I hope to see the selected projects develop so that once they are ready and once the world is ready, they can come out on the silver screen.

Until then, I commend all those who have worked so hard to present their films at various stages of development and production, especially in challenging times like the ones the world is experiencing now.

But maybe we can all take comfort in knowing that this too shall pass, whereas hopefully, your stories will remain.

Rym Ali Festival President

About the Amman International Film Festival – Awal Film

Jordan's first international film festival that showcases Arab and international movies is long overdue. The Jordanian small, but vibrant, local film industry has begun to show what it can do, with talented directors winning international acclaim with features such as Captain Abu Raed, Theeb, The Last Friday, When Monaliza Smiled, 3000 Nights and Blessed Benefit.

On the other hand, Jordan is already firmly on the map as a filming location for foreign filmmakers, who choose to film in the Kingdom for its diverse landscapes, ancient heritage, urban mix, easy procedures and government support. Movie-goers have been watching scenes filmed in Jordan at least since Lawrence of Arabia hit the big screen in 1962. In more recent years, the country has provided compelling locations for numerous international award-winning movies including Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, Star Wars: Episode IX, Aladdin, The Martian and The Hurt Locker.

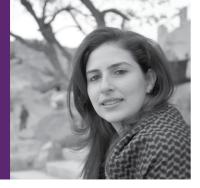
What it has arguably lacked is an exciting showcase for emerging Arab and Jordanian talent whose work is engaging a growing local and international audience. **Amman International Film Festival – Awal Film** – initially developed with MAD Solutions and due to start on 23 August 2020 in Abdali district and at the Royal Film Commission – comes as a major step towards filling that gap. It is organised under the umbrella of the Royal Film Commission – Jordan.

The aim, according to its president HRH Princess Rym Ali, is "Developing and promoting an Arab cinema that reflects the creativity of the region and tackles the issues that are prevalent today."

The distinctive edge of this Festival lies in the recognition of various talents involved in the making of a film: direction, scriptwriting, editing, photography and acting. The competitive section is reserved to Arab filmmakers and includes feature-length narratives and documentaries, as well as shorts. A non-competitive international section will showcase debut films from all over the world.

In addition to screenings, the Amman Film Industry Days, a program aimed at a professional film audience including seminars, workshops, pitching sessions and talks, will stimulate aspiring filmmakers in Jordan and the region.

Amman International Film Festival – Awal Film aims to foster a creative buzz among directors, celebrities and film enthusiasts of all kinds, by offering high-quality films, regardless of their box-office performance. Whether you are a budding Arab filmmaker or an international veteran, an actor or a critic, an industry insider or an enthusiastic consumer, Amman International Film Festival – Awal Film welcomes you!



Introduction to the Amman Film Industry Days

The creation of film is a journey of learning and of growing, traced through a collaborative process that joins creativity, resourcefulness, dedication and hard work. It is these same words that also describe the journey of the inaugural edition of the Amman International Film Festival – Awal Film and the 1st edition of its industry arm, the Amman Film Industry Days (AFID).

The rigorous preparations for this much anticipated cinematic manifestation were unexpectedly derailed in March of this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, this road bump motivated and encouraged the festival's team, keen on holding the inaugural edition in 2020 as planned, to find a new path to deliver this first edition, adapting it to the current circumstances, while also ensuring to offer its audience a new and unforgettable experience.

The festival's screenings will therefore take place in an alternative and exciting formula that combines drive-in cinema at Abdali and open air screenings at the Royal Film Commissions – Jordan; the industry activities will happen online, whilst some of its sessions would combine online and physical attendance in a safe, hybrid format.

Between August 24th and August 26th, 2020 and through its program of seminars, workshops and talks, the Amman Film Industry Days will act as a forum that sheds light on challenging areas of the filmmaking process that Jordanian and Arab filmmakers face today, in addition to sharing journeys and experiences by experts in the field.

AFID pitching platforms will also be the stage to showcase a selection of 10 projects in development and four films in post-production from Jordan and the Arab World, chosen from 60 submissions, to present their work to an independent jury and to a professional audience. The selected filmmakers representing these projects will also benefit from an intense pitching training and from custom-made consultations to help guide them in the journeys of their films.

The three-day event will culminate in the AFID pitching platforms' awards announcement on August 26th, 2020 where the AFID jury will grant the winners cash and in-kind awards, thanks to the support of our partners, to help bring their films to completion.

We are thrilled to embark on this exciting ride together where the Amman Film Industry Days, slowly but surely, cement the way to unveil the region's exceptional narratives as part of the Amman International Film Festival mission to celebrate a new generation of Arab filmmakers.

Sincerely, **Deema Azar** Head of the Amman Film Industry Days

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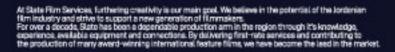
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Amman Film Industry Days Jury

Hady Zaccak - Jury President

Hady Zaccak is a Lebanese award-winning filmmaker and a professor at the Institute for Theater, Audiovisual and Cinematographic Studies film school (IESAV), St. Joseph University - Beirut. He directed more than 20 documentaries. His selective filmography includes: "Ya Omri" (104 wrinkles), winner of the Jury Award Malmo Arab Film Festival of Sweden in 2017; "Kamal Joumblatt, Witness and Martyr", winner of the Francophone Trophy for the best documentary in 2016; "Marcedes", FIPRESCI Award at f the Dubai International Film Festival in 2011; "A History Lesson", 1st prize winner at the Arab Film Festival of Rotterdam in 2010; "Refugees for Life" in 2006. In 1997, he wrote a book in French about the history of Lebanese cinema: "Le Cinéma Libanais, itinéraire d'un cinéma vers l'inconnu (1929-1996)".



Jihan El Tahri

Jihan El Tahri is an Egyptian-French award-winning director, writer, visual artist and producer. She is the General Director of the Berlin-based documentary support and capacity-building institution DOX BOX. In 2017, Tahri was invited to join the Academy of Arts and Sciences (Oscars). Additionally, she is a mentor at the Documentary Campus in Germany and Ouaga Film Lab in Burkina Faso. Her recent work as a visual artist includes exhibitions in France, Germany, Norway, Mexico and Poland. Tahri started her career as a foreign correspondent covering Middle Eastern politics. In 1990, she began directing and producing documentaries for the BBC, PBS and Arte. Her award-winning documentaries include "Nasser", which premiered in the official selection at Toronto International Film Festival and was the grand winner of the Africa Movie Academy Awards; and the Emmy-nominated "House of Saud". Her writings include: "Les Sept Vies de Yasser Arafat" and "Israel and the Arabs: the 50 Years War".



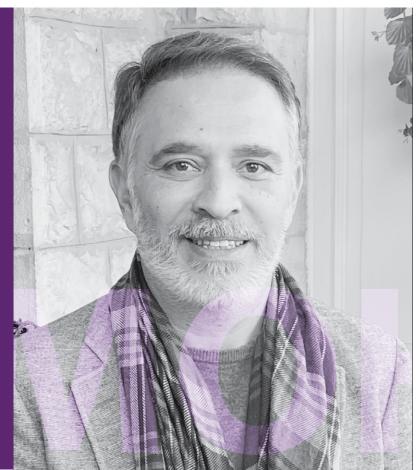
Lina Chaabane Menzli

Lina Chaabane Menzli is a producer at Nomadis Images since 1997 with an educational background in Modern Languages and International Studies, from the London South Bank University (LSBU). She has been working actively in the field of cinema in Tunisia as producer of short, feature and documentary films. Her credits include the award-winning feature films: "Satin Rouge", "Buried Secrets" and "Foreign Body", all by Raja Ammari as well as "Inhebbek Hedi" and "Weldi" by Mohamed Ben Attia, in addition to the documentaries "It was Better Tomorrow" by Hinde Boujemaa, "Cursed be the Phosphate" and "On the Crossbar" by Sami Tlili. She is part of the pedagogical committee of SUD ECRITURE - a screenwriting workshop for African and Arab screenplay writers – and of MED FILM FACTORY, a training program with the Royal Film Commission - Jordan. From 1992 to 2006, she was part of the organizing committee of Carthage Film Festival and since 2018, she is the executive director of the Manarat Mediterranean film festival.



Mohannad Al Bakri

Since 2019, Al Bakri is the Managing Director of the Royal Film Commission - Jordan (RFC). Holding a Bachelor's degree in Sociology and Archaeology, Al Bakri has been involved in the field of creative industries for over a decade in the Arab region. His previous tenure was at New York University in Abu Dhabi (2015 – 2019), where he was Director of External Relations and Partnerships. Prior to that, Al Bakri was the Regional Managing Director of Luminus Media – Jordan (SAE Institute) from 2012 until 2015. Al Bakri is not new to the RFC. He served as its Capacity Building Manager for five years (2007 – 2012), during which he largely contributed to the development of its local and regional programs. He has started his professional career at the Hashemite Fund for Human Development where he developed dynamic programs promoting the active role of youth in society.





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Obstacles are many, and so are excuses. Though sometimes it can be normal to have doubts, to overthink, or to hesitate, standing still has never been, and will never be an option. As such, SGBJ drives progress by always moving forward, leaning on its solid experience, expert know-how, and innovative products. Attentive to its clients and alongside its partners, SGBJ functions as a catalyst, accelerating the economy, and always with the same objective in mind: to get things moving.

SOCIETE GENERALE DE BANQUE - JORDANIE



Amman Film Industry Days Experts



Stefano Tealdi Pitching Expert and Trainer

Born in Johannesburg (South Africa) in 1955, Tealdi is a producer, director and tutor who studied Architecture in Torino – Italy and founded with 2 partners the film production company Stefilm in 1991. His recent productions include: "Exemplary Behaviour" (Golden Dove DOK Leipzig, FIPRESCI and Interreligious Award 2019);"My Home, in Libya" (Locarno Film festival, DOK Leipzig, Chicago Int. Film Festival 2018, Premio Corso Salani - Trieste FF e Best Doc Glocal - Torino 2019), "Wonderful Losers, A different world" (Best doc feature Warsaw FF 2017, Trieste FF 2018 and Lithuania's candidate to the Academy Awards 2019) and "The Strange Sound of Happiness" (special mention Next Masters DOK Leipzig 2017, Terra di Siena -Premio della Critica, Special mention In-Edit, Barcelona 2018). Other films include: "The Queen of Silence" (IDFA 2014, Silver Horn, best feature length doc Krakow FF 2015, Golden Nanook - Flahertiana IDF Perm 2015); "Char, no man's island" (Berlinale Forum 2013), "Vinylmania" (IFF Rotterdam 2012), "Mostar United" (IDFA 2009). In 2008, Tealdi directed "A World of Pasta" and "Doctor Ice" (Science Film Festival - Milano 2009). Since 2011 he directs the doc TV series "Food Markets - In the Belly of the City" (20x52, best international TV program US Taste Awards 2014) and recently produces "Food Makers go Global" (5 x 26 MDR/Arte). Tealdi also tutors on storytelling and pitching for: Biennale Cinema and VR College Venice, Durban FilmMart, Marchè du Film Cannes, Documentary Campus, EAVE, EDN-European Documentary Network, ESoDoc, La Fabrique Cinémas du Monde - Institut Français, Factory, Films de 3 Continents - Produire au Sud, Imagination - Arab Film Scriptwriting, Jump In - Poitiers FF, Maia Workshops, Med Film Factory, Ouaga Film Lab, TFL-Torino Film Lab, Scuola Holden, ZagrebDox Pro, ZELIG Film School.



Viola Shafik Script Consultant and Project Mentor

Viola Shafik is a filmmaker, curator and film scholar. She is the author of "Arab Cinema: History and Cultural Identity", 19982016/ (AUC Press), "Popular Egyptian Cinema: Gender, Class and Nation", 2007 (AUC Press), and the editor of "Documentary Filmmaking in the Middle East and North Africa", 2020 (AUC Press). Her book project is entitled "Embodying Revolution-Representing Revolution. Theories of Arab Revolutionary Documentary". She also taught at the American University in Cairo, Zürich University, Humboldt University and Ludwig Maximilians University, Munich.

Shafik was the Head of Studies of the Documentary Campus MENA Program 20112013- and worked as a curator and consultant for numerous international film festivals, such as La Biennale di Venezia, the Berlinale, Dubai Film Festival, board member of the World Cinema Fund among others. She directed several documentaries, most notably "Jannat `Ali-Ali im Paradies/My Name is not Ali" (2011) and "Arij - Scent of Revolution" (2014).



Nadia Eliewat Script Consultant and Project Mentor

Nadia Eliewat is a Jordanian creative producer, screenwriter and script editor. In 2015, Eliewat founded Screen Project, a boutique Film & TV production company based in Jordan. The company's focus is to develop Arab/Arab related films and series for various screen platforms.

Eliewat is best known for producing and co-writing the Lebanese box-office hit "Mahbas" (Solitaire) (2016) with over 110,00 admissions in addition to the Jordanain film "When Monaliza Smiled" (2012). She is currently in pre-production for "Yellow Bus" by Wendy Bednarz and in development for "The Station" by Sara Ishaq, recipient of 6 awards/funds including the Hubert Bals Fund and Jordan Film Fund and a participant at Cannes> prestigious co-production platform L>ATELIER 2020.

In 2017, Eliewat managed the Dubai Film Market; the business and trade hub of the Dubai International Film Festival. She holds the academic rank of Associate Professor after teaching screenwriting and production at the American University in Dubai from 2010 to 2017.



Ahmed Bedjaoui AFID Submissions Reader and Evaluator

Ahmed Bedjaoui graduated from the Paris Institute of Cinematographic Studies (IDHEC). He holds a PhD in American studies (Scott Fitzgerald in Hollywood) and is presently professor of audiovisual communication and cinema at Algiers University 3.

Artistic manager of Algiers International film Festival, Bedjaoui's publications include "Images et visages" (2012), "Cinéma et guerre de libération, des batailles d'images" (2014), "Littérature et cinémas arabes" (2016), "La Guerre d'Algérie dans le cinéma mondial" (2016), "Le cinéma à son âge d'or" (all published by Chihab Algiers) and "Cinema and the Algerian War of Independence:

Culture, Politics and Society" (2020, Palgrave Macmillan NY.). He also published two articles for NHK review. Bedjaoui was curator for many film weeks and exhibitions (among them The Saga of the Algerian cinematheque and The Algerian films on Posters). In 2015, he received the UNESCO Féderico Fellini Medal for his contribution to the world film culture and in 2019, he was appointed President of the feature films Jury of the fiftieth anniversary of FESPACO film festival in Ougadougou, Burkina Faso.

AFID Pitching Platforms



Director

Type

Dima Hamdan

Producer/ Production company

Feature narrative

Total estimated budget

USD 700,000

Secured Financing

Contact Information

msdimahamdan@gmail.com

Dima Hamdan

Amnesia

Palestine / Jordan

Synopsis

On the last night of Ramadan, a man wakes up and finds himself in the middle of a road in Jericho, with no memory of who he is. He walks to the nearest mosque, where men are performing the last prayers, and they receive him with mixed emotions; some are sympathetic while others are suspicious.

He gradually regains fragments of his memory and realizes he is not from here but still cannot understand what brought him to town.

Meanwhile, Um Firas is writing a farewell letter to her husband; she can no longer tolerate their pain, nor his incessant questions about the reasons why their only son, Firas, had taken his own life.

No one knows the real reason why Firas killed himself except for the amnesiac. Only he can tell Um Firas what really happened, so maybe she can understand the extent of her son's sacrifice.

Director's biography

Dima Hamdan is a Palestinian filmmaker and screenwriter currently based in Berlin. She has directed a few short films in London, Amman, and Berlin, and is currently preparing to shoot her first feature in Jordan.



Director

Director's intention

I wanted to explore other ways of understanding what occupation is, beyond the obvious visual symbols (soldiers, tanks, barbed wire, the wall). I was not able to understand this myself before I finally managed to travel and live in Palestine, about ten years ago. But in addition to the effects of Israeli occupation on everyday life, there is a different form of "occupation". When people remain hostage to old and backward beliefs, they are practically handing the occupation another stick to beat them with.



Director

Widad Shafakoj

Producer/ Production company

Widad Shafakoj / Robert Miller / Eric Angelson

Type

Feature Documentary

Total estimated budget

500,000 USD

Secured Financing

7,000 USD for development

Contact Information

Widad Shafakoj widad.shafakoj@gmail.com

Caesar (Tsar)

Jordan

Synopsis

Set against the backdrop of the Syrian Civil War, Europe, and the United States of America today, "Caesar" tells the story of a Syrian military officer who exposed 55,000 images of civilians captured and killed by the Syrian regime. Caesar, the whistleblowing officer's nom-de-guerre, has photographed tens of thousands of bodies in regime prisons, civilians that were tortured and executed without trial. Despite the grave danger this posed on his and his family's lives, Caesar took it upon himself to expose how his government went on to demographically re-engineer the country through large-scale executions. The photos were handed to the International Commission of Inquiry so it may investigate Syrian war crimes since the civil war erupted in 2011. Although Caesar and his family currently live in hiding, his bravery and work led to passing the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019 in the US Congress, which will move to the Senate before it becomes law. "Caesar" recounts one of today's most compelling whistle-blower tales. The film, shifting between past and present, narrated by Caesar himself, examines the detail of his carefully crafted mission, from smuggling the photos out of regime prisons, to fleeing his country with his family.

Director's biography

Widad Shafakoi, a humanitarian, activist, and filmmaker, has chosen film as a tool to relay her beliefs and concerns about society. Widad directed "ID: 000", an award-winning short documentary about the abuse and stigma faced by orphans in the Jordanian society. The film made a significant impact on Jordanian regulations, leading to policy changes to protect and improve the social status of orphans. In 2013, Widad directed "The Last Passenger", a short documentary about Syrian refugees. In 2014, she was able to depict one of the topics closest to her heart; "If You Meant to Kill Me", her first feature documentary, addresses the controversial topic of women who are threatened by honor killings and voluntarily turn themselves into prison for protection. In 2017, Widad directed "17", a feature documentary supported and commissioned by HRH Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein. The film is about the U-17 Jordanian female football team, featuring intimate portraits of young women aspiring to become great athletes. The team competed in the first ever World Cup to be held in the region. "17" premiered at El Gouna Festival in Egypt, it was selected to compete in the Tubingen Film Festival in Germany, the Arab Film Festival in San Francisco, and the Carthage Film Festival in Tunisia, to name a few, as it was also theatrically released in Switzerland, Jordan and Morocco, and more recently released on Amazon Prime Video and Shahid.net.

market—a story still relevant today as families live the aftermath of his leaking photos of 11,000 unidentified bodies, and as the American president Trump signed Caesars Syrian Civilian Protection Act, which was activated June 2020.



Director's intention

The goal behind every documentary is to raise the awareness of audiences, and to tell the stories of people who have no voice in the world. With that in mind, the film aims to shed light on the tragedy that has befallen Syria and its people, narrated by a person who has experienced the regime's injustice first-hand. This emotionally complex picture will evoke questions on universal topics like humanitarian crises, injustice, and empathy for people who risk their lives for the greater good of others. As a documentary filmmaker with a background in topics centred on human rights, using my medium to tell the stories of the Syrians around me was simply second nature. I made several films revolving around Syrian refugees, their stories, and their suffering, and I have since become friendly with many of them. Caesar personally intrigues me. I have been studying him closely, and I stumbled upon his "partner in crime", Sami, who helped him plan his exceptional escape. With no previous documentaries on Caesar, the exclusivity of getting him on board and building a trusting relationship with him was an achievement to me. The film also has an edge in the global

Producer's note

Back when "Caesar" was only a notion, an idea, what began as a straightforward project, is developing into a fully-fledged epic of its own; "Caesar", a man who created an exceptional movement against Syria and its crimes.

So how do you interest the public in "Caesar"? Well, you start with the basics: is Caesar an interesting character? Yes. Is there something unique and special about what he's done? Yes. This could be a war piece to some, but it goes beyond that to tell you a story about a few families, each represented differently in certain segments of the film and connected well together by Caesar.

I think "Caesar" is a beacon of inspiration for those who have lost and still looking for their loved ones from the war. For those who are seeking closure, for the fight against tyranny, for the belief that we must be better and never let this happen again.

Of course, low-budget films come with some limitations, however, with marketing tools being quite affordable and easily manageable, marketing the film won't be hard. The content sells itself, and the picture is intense which makes for ideal branding.

Now, with the multitude of festivals reaching out for documentary filmmakers in the region, and Widad's presence in the scene as one of the emerging documentarians, the film has a big chance in nominations, wins, and sales.



Director

Amjad Al Rasheed

Producer/ Production company

Rula Nasser & Aseel Abu Ayyash The Imaginarium Films

Туре

Feature Narrative

Total estimated budget

662,850 USD 469,297 JOD

Secured Financing

163,000 USD 24.6%

Contact Information

Aseel Abu Ayyash aseel_Abuayyash@Live.com Amjad Al Rasheed alrasheed.amjad@gmail.com

Inshallah A Boy

Jordan

Synopsis

Nawal is grieving the sudden death of her husband, while trying to move on as a single mother, she knows that her husband's brother Rifqi is asking for part of her limited inheritance since she doesn't have a son. The Inheritance is just a house where she lives with her only daughter. A house that she was able to buy after working many years. Nawal is trying to defend her right and protect her home in various ways, but the risk of losing everything increases when Rifqi decides to file an inheritance inventory case in court, where Nawal turns to deception.

In court, and faced with the limited options presented, Nawal feels trapped but decides not to give up and fight: Nawal lies in front of the judge and claims that she is pregnant. Although this lie was supposed to save her from constant threats, over time, Nawal becomes more desperate as she faces a difficult choice; despite her religion and traditions, she has to find a man to impregnate her; otherwise, she will lose everything including her daughter. Three weeks is all she has to face her fears, the unknown, society, beliefs, and her own humanity.

Director's biography

Amjad holds an MFA in Cinematic Arts with a concentration in Directing and Editing. His interest in directing started in 2005 by directing music videos which encouraged him to write and direct a couple of short films before he was selected to attend the Talent Campus during the 57th Berlinale, such an experience impacted his life and he directed more than five short films that were acclaimed in many Arab and international film festivals, such as Durban International Film Festival, and DIFF. In 2015, his project "The Parrot" won the Prize of the Robert Bosch Stiftung (Germany). In 2016, he was selected by "Screen International" as one of five "Arab Stars of Tomorrow" showcasing the region's up-and-coming young talents. Amjad is active in TV and commercials and is currently working on his debut feature "Inshallah a Boy" which was selected in Crossroads Thessaloniki Film Festival and Cairo Film Connection.



Director's intention

I grew up in a family full of women, I used to listen to their stories about abuse, unjustness and sacrifice. Their stories are still ingrained in me reawakened continuously by similar issues brought up in front of me by other women.

"Inshallah A Boy" is inspired by my Aunt Sarah, a woman who spent her whole life with a man who made her gradually unrecognizable to herself. She dedicated her life to the service of her family. Even when she bought a home with her own money, her husband forced her to transfer the house's deed to him, as it's shameful to live in a woman's house.

When he died, according to the law, the inheritance should have been distributed amongst his closest kin as she only had daughters. At that moment, I wondered what are her options, is it logical to abide by laws created 1400 years ago? These questions inspired me to narrate a story where unjust practices of tradition are normalized — a story of survival, empowerment, and hope against the backlashes of inequality.

Producer



Producer's note

We started working together on this project at the end of 2017. Despite the film being considered a small project and having a limited budget, it carries a very critical issue that can face a profound, radical speech on women's rights.

I have been researching women's rights in Islam. A topic of great misunderstanding and distortion. Inheritance law has been thus faulted: Why have women been discriminated against? Why the allotment of half a man's share? Is this not prejudice and oppression?

But that was 1400 years ago, how come we have different laws that rule the various aspects of life, but when it comes to women's issues, there has been no further work done or more interpretations.

We are confident that we have a topic that can create a debate and possibly a critical one in a time where new radical ideologies are affecting more of our beliefs, societies, and culture in the Arab world.

I have been through this same experience many times; a limited budget, a first-time director; I love it and still enjoy it.



Director

Aysha El-Shamayleh

Producer/ Production company

Batoul Ibrahim Writers' Cell

Type

Feature Narrative

Total estimated budget

JOD 500,000 (approx USD 700,000)

Secured Financing

10%

Contact Information

Batoul Ibrahim batoul@writerscell.com

She Who Lives

Jordan

Synopsis

Aysha (20s) is a dance creator fixated on using the body to express the human story in the grand scale of the cosmos. An ambitious, intelligent, absurd artist, walking within an Arab context that doesn't dwell much on the passionate need for understanding and embodying life, the friction calls for comedy.

Taking place over her father's last day alive, she observes him learn to leave the body in a battle with lung cancer, while her mother struggles to kneel to the last chapter of romantic love. Aysha is determined to give her father a decent exit, which demands an arduous becoming in matters of the heart and spirit, the growth challenges her romantic relationship. The family fluctuates between the ridiculous, funny and heartbreaking, the self-contained and expressive, the forever and never again, the everyday and the supernatural. Yet mysteriously, in the process of losing an earthly father, a heavenly one unexpectedly takes center stage.

Director's biography

Aysha El-Shamayleh is a co-founder of Writers- Cell, a production company and development house that creates original series/films for global streaming platforms. She is a writer/director and series creator. Her creative career started in 2007, as an international slam poetry champion, holding national titles in the US and the world.

Aysha leads the development department, responsible for the creative vision and labor behind the company's original content. She is currently preparing to shoot her first short film "Bethesda". Her feature directorial debut, "She Who Lives", is in late development. She is also developing a science fiction/dark comedy series, "Zenith", exploring the human experience of homelessness on the physical, emotional and spiritual levels.

Aysha graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with honors. She holds a Bachelors degree in Politics, Philosophy and Economics. She is a Global Media Makers fellow; a program by Film Independent (Los Angeles, USA).



Director's intention

I'm concerned with what one digests of life and what we serve the world on the basis of it. From my observation, demand in the entertainment market stems from psychological and spiritual dilemmas, not anything less personal than that.

This film, based on the loss of my father, handles death as an act of love causing us to surrender. Our treatment of a universal subject within an Arab household exposes the world of affection here. The protagonist embodies a diverse portrayal of Arabness. We blur lines between fiction/reality, humor/gravity, banal/divine, triggering questions for viewers and the industry.



Producer's note

Aysha (writer/director) lost her father to cancer in 2018. At the onset of his illness, it was difficult to comprehend the straightforward reality of life, that it ends. I was by her side as her collaborator and friend. We learned to obligate ourselves to understand the human condition, deeply, for all its woes and fortunes. Our emphasis was on answers. What resulted is a story that is heart wrenching and hilarious. Because that is the human condition. The end of our journey holds no reason for man's greatest fear, but life's greatest beauties, the quiet self-explanatory answers serve themselves.



Director

Firas Taybeh

Producer/ Production company

-

Туре

Feature Narrative

Total estimated budget

500,000 - 700,000 JOD

Secured Financing

Contact Information

Firas Taybeh firas.taybeh@gmail.com

The Common Land

Jordan

Synopsis

After 20 years of absence, Saleh appears in his late father's farm who passed away a week before. His return disturbs the splitting of "the common land" next to the farm in which his father has the biggest share. The splitting is led by the corrupt Abu Fawwaz who was taking advantage of the father's death and the son's absence to put his hand lands that are not his. Saleh is forced to stay in the farm until the process of splitting the land is done, not knowing that this process will eventually lead him into a journey to reconciliate with his dead father, the land, and himself.

Director's biography

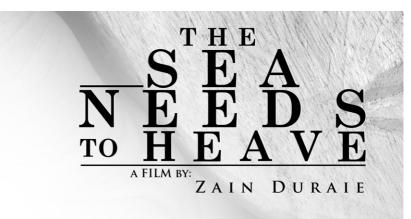
Firas Taybeh is a filmmaker/actor. He studied sculpting and fine arts at Jordan University, and then studied film at the Red Sea Institute of Cinematic Arts (RSICA). Firas wrote and directed several short fiction films and documentaries. He taught directing actors for 4 and a half years in SAE Jordan and participated in many local and foreign feature films in various positions. Firas also appeared as an actor in several shorts, features, and drama series including "Lamma Shoftak", "Never leave me", "Familial Fever", "The Parrot" and "Kabreet 45».



Director's intention

After living for almost 2 years in the countryside in the North of Jordan, we were fascinated by the beauty and the genuineness of the place and the people. We were wondering why our cinema and dramas rarely tackle this side of Jordan. Despitewhat we may think of ourselves as civilized and modern city people, we have a lot to learn from the countryside.

"The Common Land" is a story that addresses universal emotions, topics, and challenges such as adapting to change, reconciliation, grief, human relation to nature, land, water scarcity, corruption, economic struggles, organic farming, green activism and more.



Director

Zain Duraie

Producer/ Production company

Alaa Alasad / Helene

Granqvest Tabi360 / Nordic Film Factory

Туре

Feature Narrative

Total estimated budget

\$1,046,891

Secured Financing

\$7,500

Contact Information

Alaa Alasad alaa@tabi360.net

The Sea Needs to Heave

Jordan/Sweden

Synopsis

In Amman, Jordan, Nadia (40s) is married to Jalal (40s) and they share three kids. Nadia is dealing with depression as her marriage is falling apart, and secretly visits a therapist as she's trying to deal with the emptiness and loneliness she feels. One day her eldest son Basil (17) gets into a fight at school. It is certain that Basil has not been himself and is mentally unwell. However, Nadia avoids dealing with it and begins to mask the truth about Basil to herself and everyone around her in order to sustain her image in front of "society". As Basil's mental state deteriorates, Nadia's reaction is unlike any normal mother, instead she goes through an unconscious battle with denial and guilt as she becomes increasingly disturbed, confused, and slowly loses her grip on reality. Nadia finds herself sinking into a psychological trance as she projects herself through Basil's illness.

Director's biography

Zain Duraie graduated from the Toronto Film School in 2010. She started off her training with acclaimed filmmaker Annemarire Jacir on her second feature "When I Saw You", Jacir's production company "Philistine Films" produced Duraie's debut film "Horizon" in her own right which had its world premiere in 2013 at Palm Springs Shorts fest and won as Best of the Fest Selects. Duraie afterwards began developing her feature film screenplay abroad, where it was selected to be developed with the prestigious Asia Pacific Screen Academy and in parallel with its selection at Meditalents Residence and Torino Film Lab. Her latest short film "Give Up the Ghost" was nominated for the Robert Bosch Film Prize 2019. The film was officially selected at the prestigious La Biennale di Venezia 2019 "Orizzonti Shorts Competition" and it won best Arab Short Film in El Gouna Film festival 2019.



Director's intention

The importance of family is undoubtedly a worldwide perspective. This film comes from a deep place of pain and truth within me and is inspired by the story of my own family. I have witnessed it throughout my entire life. This film is being developed with the belief that something so deeply personal can also be very universal. Although this family is fighting back against a mental illness that crushes their entire core and questions their existence as a unit, the truth can also set you free, and the consequences of this truth can change your moral values... It could come at the expense of destroying the family as they know it.



Producer's note

When Zain approached me with this project, I instantly knew how passionate she feels about it because of her personal connection with it. I believe such projects are powerful because of the filmmakers genuine approach to the film after having suffered from the issue being addressed and living through it. Since we finished the production of her short film "Give Up the Ghost", I realized that shes a director I want to be working with on each and every new project. She has a clear vision and the right approach with actors. Zain is a natural-born director.

I believe this film is unique in the Arab world and can make a huge difference when such taboo subjects are put under the spotlight especially coming from a country like Jordan. after developing and writing the script, we will approach some markets to raise funds for production.

With our Swedish Co-producer Helene Granqvist on board, we believe the film will be fully financed with the joining of a French co-producer who can help us to secure some European funds. We will be applying for DFI, AFAC, Malmo Arab film festival, JFF and CineGouna.



Director

Sufi Circus

Jordan

Synopsis

Kareemah, a Palestinian American impulsive and passionate fire performer, is determined to help start a traveling borderless Sufi circus when she visits her homeland for the first time with a motley crew international circus group. When a Palestinian circus performer of their troupe is thrown indefinitely into Israeli administrative detention, Kareemah realizes she must face the wounds of her past, search for her estranged father in Palestine and find a new way to become a borderless circus.

Director's biography

Deema Dabis is a writer/director who strives to tell stories with unique perspectives that are socially relevant and impactful. Her short film "Shake" (2014) was screened at festivals worldwide.

She is currently developing her semi-autobiographical feature film "The Sufi Circus" with her Producer and sister Cherien Dabis ("Amreeka", "May in the Summer"). This project was chosen for several development labs and writing residencies including Rawi, Med Film Factory and Cinephillia Inspire Residency.

Additionally, she is producing "From the Mountain", a short film and proof of concept for a TV series about Sultan Basha AI Atrash and the Great Syrian Revolt of 1925 with director Faisal Attrache who is his great grandson.

Deema has a BA in Journalism from Indiana University (2003) in Bloomington, Indiana and an MFA in Cinematic Storytelling from the Red Sea Institute of Cinematic Arts (2012) focusing in Screenwriting and Editing.

Director

Deema Dabis

Producer

Cherien Dabis

Displaced Pictures

Туре

Feature Narrative

Total estimated budget

500,000 JOD 705,000 USD

Secured Financing

-

Contact Information

Deema Dabis deemad108@gmail.com Director



Director's intention

I am currently seeking development funds to do a proof of concept from a sequence of the film that I have already written as its own short film, to help raise funds and support for the feature film in addition to helping me continue to develop the feature film storyline. Throughout that process, I will continue to write and develop the feature script, while also continuing my research and interviews of circus artists and searching for potential collaborators.



Producer's note

The Sufi Circus truly has all the elements to make for a very unique, artful and impactful film that can reach global audiences, first through the film festival circuit then through theatrical release, broadcast and streaming. I think it will mark the arrival of an original new voice in Palestinian / Jordanian cinema.

The somewhat experimental, surreal circus performance sequences in the film have the potential to be both incredibly cinematic and tremendously poignant. Our aim is to shoot the film on the ground in Jordan within the next two years.



Director

Ahmad Alyaseer

Producer

Ahmad Alyaseer

Туре

Feature Narrative

Total estimated budget

500,000 USD

Secured Financing

Contact Information

Ahmad Alyaseer aialyaseer@gmail.com

To Him We Return

Jordan

Synopsis

Ahmad and Sumaia are the only children of Musa Bin Erfan. After his death, Ahmad must return from the UAE to cover the costs and handle the procedures of his father's funeral. Being of a big family tribe, Ahmad finds himself drowned with so many things to fulfill which he never planned for. In addition, his marriage to Samar, which has created a significant family crisis in the past, is now being confronted by his elder uncles. Ahmad is in constant turmoil between the emotional conflict among his family and the materialistic struggles with the mourning obligations.

Will the financial costs burden him to a level where his grief fades away?

Director's biography

Ahmad Alyaseer studied filmmaking at Middlesex University and graduated with first class honors. He directed, produced and co-wrote an experimental feature film "When Time Becomes a Woman" (2012) which was screened at various film festivals including the longest running Sci-Fi film festival in the world, Boston Sci-Fi Film Festival.

Ahmad then kicked off his career in the TV industry where he directed six TV series over the course of 8 years, all of which generated positive feedback and high viewership. The first of these was the two-season show "Asfoureyeh" (The Nuthouse) (20152016-), considered to be the first Jordanian sitcom.

His latest TV series is a modern Jordanian drama entitled "Selah Bela Jaremah" (Weapon Without a Murder) (2020), praised by many industry professionals for pushing the modern Jordanian drama to new limits.

Ahmad also created, with his sister Rana Alyaseer, the Pan-Arab TV series "Click" and they have jointly written and published two novels.



Director's intention

I love contradictions. It is what defines the universe. Because of darkness, we know light. Because of happiness, we know sadness. And because of death, we witness life! The film has a distinguished visual identity. The moment you go through the script, it has surreal elements, it will have dark themed locations and minimal themed music. It has powerful conflicts between the characters that if captured in the right way, will be remembered for a lifetime. The audience by the end of the film, should feel suffocated and tired of this thought-provoking and shocking experience.



Director

Serene Husni

Producer

Rula Nasser

The Imaginarium Films

Туре

Feature Documentary

Total estimated budget

80,000 USD

Secured Financing

31000 USD

Contact Information

Serene Husni serene.husni@gmail.com

To See Jenin

Canada, Palestine, Jordan

Synopsis

A Palestinian filmmaker sets out to make a film about her family hometown of Jenin. Overlooking the valley, or "marj" of Ibn Amer, Jenin was rich with water springs and fertile soils cultivated by generations of Palestinian peasants. The filmmaker's own great grandfather, Mustapha, was a landlord who once owned (and lost) vast lands in the valley. Her family, the Alahmads, loaded small pickup trucks with famous Jenini watermelons and exported them to Syria and Lebanon.

Arriving after more than 50 years of occupation, the militarized landscapes of contemporary Jenin do not meet the romantic imaginings in the filmmaker's mind. Today, Marj Ibn Amer is cut off by Israel's segregation wall, while buildings of concrete are crawling into the valley. Watermelons no longer grow in Jenin.

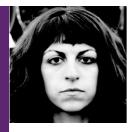
As she looks for traces of her family and the places they once inhabited, she is guided by the Palestinians who didn't leave. They tell her how "to see Jenin".

Director's biography

Serene Husni Alahmad is a writer, translator and filmmaker. She completed her MFA in Documentary Media with distinction from Ryerson University in Toronto, Canada. Her debut documentary "Zinco" received the Audience Award for Best Documentary from the Franco-Arab Film Festival in 2013. The film chronicles the urban history of Talbieh refugee camp in Jordan through personal histories of the camp's inhabitants. "Zinco" looks for visual manifestations of displacement in the very construction material used in a constant process of building and rebuilding Palestinian refugee homes.

A co-founding member of Dalaala Arabic-English translation collective, Serene has translated many films, articles and literary works.

She is currently a film resident at the Toronto Palestine Film Festival, where she is working on a short documentary titled "The Good Pantry". Based on a story from her youngest uncle's teenage years in Amman in the late 70s, the film talks about the role of the pantry in Palestinian home-making - a central theme in the filmmaker's cinematic work.



Director's intention

In "To See Jenin", the filmmaker narrates the story of an exiled Palestinian family and provides a firsthand account of her own experience of return to Palestine. The film borrows from "city symphony" documentary genre of the 1920s to portray personal relics, the people, and landscapes of contemporary Jenin. The filmmaker's observations of daily life in Jenin are interrupted & mediated by the lived experience of Palestinians who didn't leave. The larger story of colonization is told by centering the daily struggles of Palestinian farmers, who have an intimate knowledge of the land and witnessed its transformations over decades of occupation.



Producer's note

A second film treating the fantasy of homeland and memories. "My Love Awaits Me by the Sea" was a special experience. It is the question and the realization of identity. Now, in "To See Jenin", I am walking in the steps of another filmmaker who wants to discover her imaginary land, her history and home, in a different context, voice and realization.

The budget of the film is limited and based on giving a proper time for the director to try and find her Jenin.

A personal film that she has to experiment with many elements in order to build her own essay of landscape and memories.

In Development



Director

Areeb Zuaiter

Producer

Rima Saoub / Brigid Maher/ Basel Mawlawi Tabi360/ Tiny Leaps Production/ Kinana Films

Type

Feature Documentary

Total estimated budget

221,846 USD

Secured Financing

61,800 USD

Contact Information

Rima Saoub rima@tabi360.net

Yalla Parkour

Jordan

Synopsis

Stockholm Metropolitan Area, 2021. In a bus crossing towards the outskirts, AHMAD, 26, is on a mission of spreading Parkour skills. The life he left behind is one that he values a lot but that is troubled:

Khan Younis, 2015. Ahmad, 19, ABDULLAH, 19, MOHAMMED, 22, and JIHAD, 25, are inseparable Gazan millennials. In an information age, those friends are hustling to catch up. They keep practicing Parkour despite challenges. While Jihad's efforts are overpowered by family obligations, Abdulla's are trimmed by the need to earn a degree. While Mohammad's pursuit of the sport is halted by a detrimental injury, Ahmad's is rewarded by a realization of his long-sought exit plan. Now, Ahmad lives the "Gazan dream"; fleeing Gaza. His goal is to give back and keep parkour alive in the besieged city. He toils towards another, conflicting, mission: helping his friends, what is left of Gaza Parkour, out.

Director's biography

Areeb Zuaiter is a visual storyteller who focuses on art, identity and social issues. Her work was nominated and awarded in festivals around the world.

Zuaiter led the Regional Department at the Royal Film Commission – Jordan, she worked for the Associated Press in an opportunity that exposed her to the latest technologies in production and broadcasting. She worked at the National Museum of American History where she produced some of the Museum's key film projects.

Areeb had been on the evaluation committee of some of the most competitive programs that cater for the Arab Region.

Zuaiter is an Adjunct Professor at two of Washington, D.C.'s major schools of communication; American University:s School of Communication and Howard University:s Cathy Hughes School of Communications. She is currently working on her upcoming debut feature documentary, "Yalla Parkour", in addition to her upcoming short narrative, "One Last Wish". Director



Director's intention

I come from a place where culture is misconstrued and where misconceptions are formed. More often than not, I encounter voices that can make a difference; only if they're heard.

In all my work, I am determined to portray the human face of the difficulties in my place of origin. This human face is best represented through people who keep giving despite challenges. In this particular documentary, giving comes from the least likely of places. It is intriguing to see how the friends I'm following are still able to give and perform despite the continued limitations they live.



Producer's note

I was recently introduced to the writer/Director Areeb Zuaiter as we are currently also working on her short film "The Last Wish". I was immediately impressed by the beautifully written concept and how easy the emotions travelled from the simple written words.

The idea behind this documentary, the passion and true emotions conveyed in the characters is something I truly admire and stand behind, I was privileged to have never been through what they went through, but it also makes me more responsible to make sure such inspiring stories get out and give those characters a well deserved moment in the sun.

Post-Production



Director

Zaid Abu Hamdan

Producer

Saba Mubarak, Aya Wohoush PanEast Media

Туре

Feature Narrative

Total estimated budget

537,815 JOD (759,625 USD) Post-production budget: 111,156 JOD (157,000 USD)

Secured Financing

Secured postproduction financing: 20,000 USD

Contact Information

Aya Wuhoush aya@paneastmedia.com

Daughters of Abdul-Rahman

Jordan

Synopsis

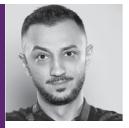
In a lower middle-class neighborhood in Amman Jordan, single and middle aged Zainab lives a dreary existence as a local seamstress and her father's keeper; a distant old man who is going senile, Abdul-Rahman.

After her father accidentally sees her in a wedding dress she is altering for her cousin, Zainab wakes up to find her father missing – the man who gives reason to her existence. Zainab must now reunite with her three estranged sisters at the old family bookshop to figure out how to find their old man, but the news of Abdul-Rahman's disappearance must not become public.

Director's biography

Holder of an MFA from the New York Film Academy in Hollywood California, Zaid started his career working on international TV shows as an assistant director and producer, including TV reporting for MBC group from Hollywood. Zaid's TV work included developing E! Entertainment's Golden Globes and Oscar coverages in Los Angeles, in addition to directing reality and scripted shows such as Sesame Street, competition shows and mentoring the Arab Film Studio program at Image Nation, Abu Dhabi.

Since 2009, Zaid wrote and directed 5 internationally award-winning short films, gaining critical acclaim, including his 2012 Oscar-qualified film "Bahiya & Mahmoud".



Director's intention

Daughters of Abdul-Rahman is not a film that focuses on victimizing women or tyrannizing men, but observe a deeply misogynistic system that while being harsher on women, it hinders the growth of both genders alike. To see my own and many mothers be affected by this system galvanized me to write this story. This film is for my mother.

Media has desensitized the aggression towards women and the conformed life Arab women rarely find a way out of. In making this film, we flip the script, and make the oppressed take the first step towards a better future and set up solid grounds for a 14-year-old girl. The four sisters who reached a situation where they operate from a patriarchal mindset, break that mold in the film and own their womanhood and who they are.



Producer's notes

People are born as a blank slate and very similar to each other, until the outside world starts forcing them (woman and men alike) to conform. I was captured by this project because I am an advocate for people being themselves and for individuality, and as a producer on this female centric film, my artistic role comes from a place of truth.

As a Jordanian woman, I lived with those characters and grew up with them. The characters Zaid created are familiar and relatable. While they grew up in the same house in the same family in the same environment, they are totally different and find their unique voices throughout the film. I love these characters despite their flaws, or what could seem as their weaknesses. While filming, and since I am an actress myself, I worked closely with Zaid, lending him a hand in communicating his direction to the actresses. Our main goal is to keep the truthfulness and integrity of this project.

Post-Production



Director

Nidal Al Dibs

Producer

Mostafa Youssef

Seen Films in co-production with Hassala Production and Nidal Al Dibs

Туре

Feature Documentary

Total estimated budget

129,920 USD

Secured Financing

60,000 USD

Contact Information

Mostafa Youssef mostafa@seenfilms.com

Home There.. Cinema Here..

Syria, Egypt

Synopsis

As the revolution turns into war; Nidal, a Syrian filmmaker, is forced to leave the country. He locks his home in Damascus and travels with his wife and daughter to Cairo, at the time celebrating a successful revolution. He is invited by friends to visit an old cinema theater which they are about to renovate.

Nidal, whose refuge in Cairo continues to extend indefinitely, longs for his home and city and finds refuge in navigating personal family home videos and memories as he discovers a new space: an old locked cinema in the heart of Cairo. He pieces the two together to make a film about hope and longing. Perhaps also about despair.

Director's biography

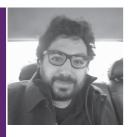
Nidal Al-Dibs was born in Syria in 1960. An architect and director, he graduated from the Moscow VGIK Film Institute in 1995. Many of his films have received international acclaim, including the short "Ya Leil Ya Ein" (1999), which was selected for the Official Competition at Clermont-Ferrand; "Under the Ceiling" (2005), which screened at the Montreal World Film Festival, and won the Jury Prize at Salla Film Festival as well as the Best Actress prize at the Oran Film Festival; and "Black Stone" (2006), a documentary film that received a special mention at the Ismailia Film Festival and was in the official selection out of competition at the 2013 Locarno Film Festival. His latest film, "Taming" (2010), had its premiere at the Abu Dhabi Film Festival.



Director's intention

When I first visited Cairo, I wanted to finish an artwork about the Syrian revolution, but coincidentally, the Egyptian reality tempted me to do something about it instead. I have witnessed many cities throughout the Middle East in the last 30 years deteriorate in their capacity to offer cultural activities, and shutting down old beautiful cinemas like Cinema Wahby, leaving them abandoned to dust. However for a moment, there was hope of change. It was momentary, but not an illusion. I want to capture that hope, and also the despair that followed.

This is not a film about politics, ideology nor about revolution. It is a film about dreaming and the loss of dreaming, how it is enveloped in the smallest of projects in the most negligible of communities. We are true to the film: today I look in hindsight and analyze how we were then and wonder whether I too were audacious to dream.



Producer's note

"Home There.. Cinema Here.." is about the journey of cultural activists attempting to make a dream come to reality; a Refugee trying to find closure in a new start, to time travel and bring the abandoned cinema, his home and its district back to life.

By making this film, we hope to tell this powerful story of spaces themselves, shared spaces and most of all a shared creative space like a Cinema and how much they mean for society at large.

Post-Production



Director

Hyphen

Lebanon

Synopsis

In 2011, Nicole reveals to Reine that she has been going to rehab for heroin addiction. Her parents, not taking her recovery seriously, were more worried about concealing her addiction and projecting the image of the perfect family. Nicole and Reine embark on a healing journey, interviewing Nicole, visiting her rehab center, and participating in rebitthing therapy. When their uncle suddenly dies, they uncover shocking revelations about their family's role in the civil war and confess to each other the ways in which their parents were emotionally distant and abusive.

After a re-birthing session, Nicole is inspired to pursue her dream of becoming a tattoo artist and travel to Goa, India for a tattoo convention. In Goa, Nicole relapses and is hospitalized upon her return to Lebanon. A few months later, Nicole is stopped by the police in Lebanon and arrested for drug possession. The police also harass her for her appearance and sexual orientation. After 9 years of filming, Nicole discusses her hopes for the future and leaves a final message to her parents.

Director's biography

Reine Razzouk is a Lebanese director and producer. She received her master's degree in filmmaking from the ALBA – Université Balamand in Beirut. Since her graduation in 2010, Reine worked on major commercials and feature films as an assistant director and second unit director to several internationally-acclaimed directors including Ziad Doueiri, Abdelrahmane Sissako, Jihane Chouaib and Mira Nair. She is currently developing her first narrative feature film and is in post-production for «Hyphen", her first feature documentary.

Reine Razzouk

Producer

Reine Razzouk

Type

Feature Documentary

Total estimated budget

89,000 USD

Secured Financing

40,000 USD

Contact Information

Reine Razzouk reine.razzouk@gmail.com



Director's intention + producer's note

Growing up in Ain el Remmeneh, the epicenter of the Lebanese civil war (19751990-), logically, I was immersed in the divisive mentality of "us" and "them". When I began filming Nicole's healing journey, I wanted to shed light on the issues of my community, the emotional wounds of the war and the consequences of growing up in such a divided society. However, over the span of 10 years, my motivation behind the film evolved and expanded. I realized that Nicole's relationship with her parents, her addiction and her struggle for self-expression mirrored the disconnect and anger many young Lebanese people feel towards the older generation and their parents. This younger Lebanese generation is eager to break free from the conservative religion-focused norms that stigmatize self-expression, sexuality, feminism, and political freedom. "Hyphen" is a devastating essay on the precariousness of becoming the woman you want to be when you've had little guidance to that end.

Post-Production



Director

Karoline Kamel

Producer

Mai Saad

Seera Films

Type

Feature Documentary

Total estimated budget

95,000 USD

Secured Financing

50,000 USD

Contact Information

Mai Saad mai@seerafilms.org mai.saad@see-media.org

The Lottery

Egypt

Synopsis

«The Lottery» is an intimate autobiographical portrait of a Coptic Egyptian middle-class family who holds on to an elusive dream: winning the Diversity Visa lottery of the United States. Markos (the father) has continuously applied for 20 years and never been selected. Nevertheless, Markos wants his three children, Cherry, Karoline, and Michael to do the same. Using sarcasm, laughter or heated discussions, the siblings are always talking about their failure to leave. They blame their father for living an unstable life. Michael believes that the lottery isn't enough of a plan, yet follows in his father's footsteps. Cherry defies her familys pressure to meet marriage suitors but complies with applying to the lottery. Meanwhile, Karoline tries to figure out her feelings towards her fathers dream. In "The Lottery", Karoline shadows her family in their daily discussions and life, giving an authentic heartfelt story of family bonds and dreams.

Director's biography

Karoline is a journalist, researcher and writer who graduated from Tanta University-Media studies. Since 2008, Karoline works with various media organizations where she established her name through a number of investigative stories and opinion pieces first at "Al Shorouk" newspaper then at "Mada Masr". Karoline published many stories about the struggles of the Christian community and marginalized communities in Egypt. She is involved with the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights as a researcher on women and refugee rights as well as violence based on religion in Egypt. Karoline has completed a number of workshops on documentary filmmaking and photography while working on her first feature film "The Lottery".



Director's intention

For 20 years, my father applied to the diversity visa USA program - the Lottery - and has never been selected. In his attempt to prepare us for our lives in the states, he gave us foreign names: "Cherry", "Karoline" and "Michael". He treats life in Egypt as temporary, a waiting area for a better life in the USA. Through the film I explore my feelings towards the dream of traveling: is it my siblings' and mine as it is my father's? Or did we simply inherit it? I follow my family, our daily life and conflicts. Together we explore our failures and our bond as a family.



Producer's note

It is quite shocking that every year more than a million families in Egypt apply to the lottery visa, while only 5000 can win. Karoline's family have been applying for 20 years. How do they deal with constant failure? Seeing the very first rushes Karoline shot, I fell in love with her family, with this mixture of sadness, humor, love and sarcasm. Their willingness to be vulnerable and exposed is something very rare. "The Lottery" is a personal story yet an easily relatable one; a story about the bonds and drama of families who struggle with alienation in their own homeland.



An independent jury of reputable filmmakers and industry experts will decide on the Amman Film Industry Days (AFID) awards, presented to film projects selected to **AFID pitching platforms** in both the development and the post-production categories.

These cash and in-kind prizes are presented through partnerships with valued local and international institutions. The **AFID Award Announcement** will take place on August 26, 2020 at the Royal Film Commission – Jordan.

Development category

The Slate Award: in-kind lighting & grip equipment in the value of US \$15,000 from Slate Film Services –
Amman

- In-kind post-production access and use of facilities in the value of US \$14,000 from SAE Institute Amman
- US \$7,500 from Société Générale de Banque Jordanie
- Two online mentorship residencies from Film Independent USA
- Script development consultancy (narrative) from TaleBox Jordan

• Sustainable film development consultancy services (greener script mentorship/workshop, sustainable production best practice plan and sustainable production workshop) from Greener Screen - UAE

Post-production category

In-kind sound design and re-rerecording mix services in the value of US \$17,500, from Acousmatic Film
Sound - Estonia

• US \$7,500 from Société Générale de Banque – Jordanie

- In-kind color grading services in the value of US \$7,000 from Rum Pictures Jordan
- Participation of one film project in MAFF Market Forum Post Production Platform in October 2020

from Malmö Arab Film Festival





Malmo







"ACOUSMATIC







AMERICAN FILM SHOWCASE

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AUDIO-VISUAL PRODUCTION SERVICES

AUDIO-VISUAL POST-PRODUCTION SERVICES

AUDIO & VIDEO STUDIOS

BROADCASTING STUDIOS

LOCATED IN AMMAN JORDAN, LUMINUS PRODUCTION DELIVERING STATE-OF-THE-ART STUDIOS, ARE THE HIGHEST GLOBAL STANDARDS OF AUDIOVISUAL PRODUCTION AND POST PRODUCTION SERVICES. RUN BY A HIGHLY TALENTED PROFESSIONAL VIDEO PRODUCTION AND POST PRODUCTION TEAM, AND A HIGHLY SKILLED AUDIO TEAM, OUR FACILITIES INCLUDE SOME OF THE LARGEST FULL-SERVICE INDOOR CHROMA STUDIOS, A WIDE RANGE OF AUDIO SERVICES OUT OF THE 6 MIXING AND RECORDING STUDIOS, FROM ADR AND FOLEY RECORDING TO SCORING STAGE AND SOUND DESIGN SUITES, SOUND EDITING ROOMS, MASTERING SUITES AND COMPLETE FILM AND VIDEO TRANSFER SERVICES.



AFID Workshops and Sessions

TV Showrunner Workshop





Film Independent, in partnership with the U.S. Embassy in Amman, presents an eight-day virtual workshop for Jordanian and Arab series writers, led by two American showrunners: Cyris Voris ("Sleeper Cell", "Eleventh Hour") and Marlana Hope ("Desperate Housewives", "Grey's Anatomy"), who will be joined by Egyptian filmmaker Ayten Amin ("Souad", "Seventh Neighbor"). The workshop will provide participants with a practical understanding of the Writers Room and the role of the Showrunner, going over how a show creators' vision is developed through the collaborative process of a Writers Room. With case studies about Show Bibles (Series Documents), groundbreaking pilots, and best pitching practices, the workshop will also provide the participants writers with the tools to advance their projects

Cyrus Voris has been a screenwriter and television creator, writer and showrunner with his long-time partner and fellow NYU graduate, Ethan Reiff, since the early 90s. Together they have written screenplays for «Tales from the Crypt presents Demon Knight», «Bulletproof Monk», the Ridley Scott/Russell Crowe «Robin Hood» (which began as the spec script «Nottingham») and Dreamworks Animation's «Kung Fu Panda»; In television they have created and showrun such series as Fox's «Brimstone», CBS's «Eleventh Hour», TNT'S «Legends» and the Emmy and Golden Globe nominated Showtime series «Sleeper Cell»; most recently they have Executive Produced the Netflix Indian Series Bard of «Blood and History» Channel's Knightfall.

Cyrus Voris



Marlana Hope was born in Illinois, survived five years as a little girl in a log cabin in rural Pennsylvania and spent her tween and teen years on a horse ranch in Missouri. After obtaining a BFA in Theatre from the University of Illinois, she swore off inclement weather for good and headed west. Since moving to Los Angeles, Marlana has been a writer's assistant/script coordinator for «Desperate Housewives», «Friday Night Lights» and «Southland». Her writing credits include «Reaper», «Army Wives», «The Kicks», «Grey's Anatomy» and «SKAM Austin». She has two pilots currently in development. In her free time, Marlana mentors veterans as part of the Writers Guild Foundation's workshop series, tries to get into the dance studio at least once a week, and enjoys all the benefits of living in sunny Southern California. She also serves on the Writers Education Committee where she organized the WGA Writers Salon for three years bringing together hundreds of Guild members with top showrunners for a series of break-out sessions.

Ayten Amin



Ayten Amin was born in Alexandria, Egypt. She directed her first short fiction «Her Man» in 2006. The film was screened in many international festivals including Clermont Ferrand in France and screened exclusively for a whole year in Canal Plus in France, 20072008/. In 2009, she made another short fiction film entitled «Spring 89», produced by The Egyptian Film Center. The film received many awards in Egypt and was screened at several international film festivals.

Her film «Tahrir 2011" was officially selected in the out of competition section in Venice International Film Festival 2011 and won the CICT-IFTC award. It was also officially selected in TIFF Toronto International Film Festival 2011 and officially nominated for best documentary in Cinema for Peace award Berlin 2012.

In 2013, Ayten made her feature film debut with "Villa 69" which won the jury prize in Abu Dhabi Film Festival. She directed the hit TV series Seventh Neighbor in 20172018-. Her second feature film, "Souad", was officially selected in Cannes Film Festival 2020. "Souad" was the recipient of funds from Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, AFAC, CineGouna and JCC Carthage.

Joining Ayten for a case study on Seventh Neighbor are co-writers/co-directors Heba Yosri and Nadine Khan.

Getting your Film financed and out to the World



The internet provides many new avenues for financing film projects. It also provides access to world markets like never before. These opportunities have changed the face independent film production. Both will be explored in this session.

Avoiding Conflict over Content

International standards for what is acceptable and what is not change all over the world. The USA, being one of the most litigious countries in the world, takes care of these issues with insurance. We will talk about what is safe and what is not in terms of personal rights and copyright around the world.



Michael Donaldson founded Donaldson & Callif with Lisa Callif in 2008. The firm focuses on all aspects of independent film with a special focus on fair use opinions and other clearance issues in both scripted and documentary films. In 2018 alone, the firm worked on over 350 films including 250 documentaries, which were festival favorites. Twenty-nine films, including (20) documentaries worked on by Donaldson & Callif were exhibited earlier this year at the Sundance film Festival – representing 71% percent of the documentaries shown at the festival. Sixteen (16) films worked on by our firm were exhibited at the SXSW Festival in March 2019. Thirty-nine films including thirty-one (31) documentaries worked on by the firm were exhibited at the Tribeca Film Festival in April-May 2019. Donaldson & Callif has worked on a number of Oscar nominees and winners, including recent films "Free Solo" (2019), "Minding the Gap" (2019), "Icarus" (2018), "OJ.: Made in America" (2017) and "20 Feet from Stardom" (2014).

In 2007, on a pro bono basis, Donaldson negotiated with insurance companies to provide errors and omissions policies to cover material used pursuant to fair use. The process – still used to this day – made insurance available by all companies offering errors and omissions insurance to filmmakers provided the insurance application is accompanied by an opinion letter from a recognized law firm indicating that the material contained in the film was used according to the statute and within the case law defining fair use.

Joining Michael Donaldson are his associates Nicholas Marell (Getting your Film financed and out to the World) and Katy Alimohammadi (Avoiding Conflict over Content).

Introduction to International Co-Production



In addition to their local producer(s), Arab film productions are turning more and more to involving financial participations of one or more producers from other countries, forming international co-productions that would help their projects see the light.

This session will present the advantages of international co-production and explore the intricacies of the co-production relationship.





Roshanak has been working as a producer for almost 20 years. Her films have received over 30 international awards, among them the German Film Award in Gold and the Prix Europe Iris. In 2012 she launched the games company LudInc, in order to produce Serious Games. LudInc's first game, PROFESSORS. was nominated for the European Innovative Games Award and won the German Computer Games Award for Best Serious Game in 2016.

Her new film production company, IGC Films / In Good Company, founded in 2015, is focusing on smart entertainment, developing features mainly in English & German, for a 40+ audience and for

K12/family entertainment. Roshanak also works as an expert and consultant for various institutions

such as EAVE and the Academy for Children's Media. She is a member of both the German and the

European Film Academy, an EAVE graduate and group leader.

Sustainable Production Workshop



A 2-Hours interactive workshop providing the knowledge and skills to create productions in a more environmentally sustainable way. The workshop includes:

- · Environmental science basics
- TV and Film industry impact
- · Production case studies
- Best practices and resources.



Managing director of Creative Media solutions and Producers Guild of America member, produced and co-produced projects in the past 14 years all around the region including the upcoming film «Champions» as an executive producer.

Since 2014, Bassam started his green-producing and consultancy journey and in 2018 cofounded Greener Screen, a consultancy that aims to help media organisations for an ecofriendly transformation.



Abeer Bayazidi is the Training Director in Greener Screen. She works with filmmakers, writers and content creators to educate, advocate and showcase environmental sustainability and social justice causes.

Abeer believes that the media and audiovisual industry offer a great platform to host positive conversations and create awareness to causes of social justice and environmental sustainability through content.

Abeer has 12+ years of diversified experience in Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility, covering all aspects of branding and communication, to training and running wider environment sustainability programs, to public relations and advocacy to heighten awareness and influence perspective.





Gift of the United States Government

U.S. EMBASSY IN AMMAN AND FILM INDEPENDENT PARTNERSHIP AT AMMAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Film Independent, in partnership with the U.S. Embassy in Amman, is bringing together two American showrunners, including Cyrus Voris (*Sleeper Cell, Eleventh Hour*), who will be joined by Egyptian filmmaker Ayten Amin (*Souad, Seventh Neighbor*), to lead a virtual eight-day TV Showrunner workshop for Jordanian TV writers. The virtual workshop will be part of the Amman Film Industry Days (AFID).

In addition, Film Independent will give two awards to filmmakers with projects in-development at the Amman Film Industry Days. The awards will be residencies of curated programming, including script consultation and project-based meetings with American screenwriters, producers and industry executives.

Film Independent is the nonprofit arts organization that champions creative independence in visual storytelling and supports a community of artists who embody diversity, innovation and uniqueness of vision. In addition to helping filmmakers make their movies and build an audience for their projects and producing the Spirit Awards, Film Independent works to diversify the film industry.



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