

2025

الدورة السادسة
6th Edition



مهرجان عمان السينمائي الدولي

Amman International Film Festival

أول فيلم Awal Film

أيام عمان لصنّاع الأفلام

Amman Film Industry Days





مهرجان عمان السينمائي الدولي
Amman International Film Festival

أول فيلم Awal Film

2025
الدورة السادسة
6th Edition

**AMMAN FILM INDUSTRY DAYS
CATALOGUE 2025**

2-9/7/2025

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Country of Honor: Ireland



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RYM ALI

President & Co-Founder

After a long journey, we have come together to gather projects, stories, and ideas for the awards at this year's Amman Film Industry Days (AFID). With a record of some 150 submissions from 16 countries—almost twice the number of last year—the selection process exhibited the extraordinary talent and improved quality emerging from our film community, making the final choices a daunting task.

We selected 18 projects from eight different countries, all tackling personal stories that explore themes of identity and the narratives surrounding refugees and displacement. The films range from genre pieces to social dramas, each illuminating the complexities of the human experience.

As part of our commitment to fostering creativity in Amman, we have enhanced our pitching platform this year, offering more cash and in-kind awards through partnerships. We hope these resources will provide emerging filmmakers with valuable exposure and support for their projects. Our workshops showcase various voices and cinematic visions, creating opportunities for learning and idea exchange. Participants will gain tools, skills, and insights to thrive in an "unscripted world." We will also host a masterclass with the cinematic legend Yousra. Highlights will also include the Actors roundtable with Georges Khabbaz and Alexandra Viets' Script Majlis, aimed at inspiring performances and storytelling. Additionally, there will be technical workshops

such as the DocSafe roundtable on safety in documentary filming - an essential conversation for filmmakers tackling sensitive subjects - and EAVE On Demand's session on leveraging AI tools to enhance storytelling with digital technology. "The Unreal Experience" will also offer hands-on training on using Unreal Engine for hybrid storytelling with Samir.

This year's theme, "A World Unscripted," celebrates achievements born from long struggles and has led us to explore uncharted territories. As AFID kicks off, it invites parallels with the world of football. Both cinema and football embody hard work, strategy, and performance, allowing audiences to experience the emotions and unpredictability inherent in great films and thrilling matches. Both fields share universal appeal, transcending borders and uniting people regardless of background or culture. In his ideal position as President of the Jordan Football Association and Chairman of the Board of the Royal Film Commission, HRH Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein will join us to explore the intersection between cinema and football.

Life, much like art, often defies expectations. What unscripted story will you contribute with to our collective narrative? What unique perspective will you bring to our discussions this year? We hope this year's AFID program allows filmmakers to articulate and share our experiences of human connection with the world.



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BASSAM ALASAD

Head of Industry

Reclaiming Chaos: Cinema as a Response to an Unstable World

In a world riddled with fractures, from economic instability to cultural displacement, from war to silence, storytelling becomes both a fragile act and a defiant gesture. At Amman Film Industry Days (AFID), we've always believed that cinema is more than a mirror; it is a compass. And this year, under the theme A World Unscripted, we embrace uncertainty not as a flaw in storytelling, but as its very foundation.

Gone are the days when every story needed a perfect arc, a clear genre and a tidy resolution. Today's filmmakers are not looking to control the narrative; they are here to observe it, disrupt it, sometimes just survive it. What we have witnessed in this year's edition are works shaped by fragmentation, contradiction and urgency. Films shaped in spaces where truth and imagination blur, where identity is constantly redefined, and where form refuses to settle.

These are stories shaped by absence, memory, grief, and resistance. Stories that challenge inherited masculinities and return to places we're told to forget. Some use silence. Some use humour. Some rage. But no one asks for permission.

At the Industry Days, we take pride in creating a space where this kind of raw, unscripted vision is not only welcomed but also needed. Through our Development and Post-Production platforms, and through new initiatives like "The Spark Series", we continue to support filmmakers who may not yet have all the answers but know the right questions to ask.

In that spirit, we mark a special milestone: the return of two projects once pitched at AFID "Yalla Parkour" (1st edition) and "Seeking Haven for Mr. Rambo" (5th edition), now completed and premiering to festival audiences. Their evolution from rough ideas to cinematic realities is a testament to the purpose of such a platform: to accompany filmmakers through uncertainty, and to trust that the story will reveal itself in time.

To all the filmmakers who joined us this year and to those still finding the courage to begin welcome! Your stories, however unfinished or fragile, are essential. In your chaos, we find clarity. In your fragments, we find truth.

Let's keep reclaiming it together.



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200+ Festival Awards | 2 Oscar Nominations | 8 Oscar Entries

FUND CYCLES CALENDAR

CYCLE 01
POST-PRODUCTION FUND
Feb 6th – Feb 27st

CYCLE 02
PRODUCTION FUND
April 6th – April 21th

CYCLE 03
DEVELOPMENT FUND
June 6th – June 21th

CYCLE 04
POST-PRODUCTION FUND
August 6th – August 21st

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ABOUT THE AMMAN FILM INDUSTRY DAYS

Amman Film Industry Days (AFID) offers a comprehensive program of networking opportunities, project support, and industry events, including masterclasses, workshops, and panels designed to empower filmmakers in Jordan and across the region.

AFID features three competitive pitching platforms for projects in development and post-production, with a professional jury granting both in-kind and cash awards to selected winners.

Now in its fourth edition, the Amman Film Market continues to serve as a vibrant hub connecting filmmakers with potential funders, partners, and distributors. Acting as a launchpad for new projects, the market also offers additional in-kind cash awards through its strategic industry partners.

This year, AFID launches a new pilot initiative: The Spark: Web Series Showcase, highlighting bold and innovative voices from Jordan and the Arab world. The showcase is dedicated to creators reimagining episodic storytelling, featuring web series

that break away from traditional formats and leverage online platforms to engage broader and more diverse audiences.

In addition, AFID will present a curated selection of panels, workshops, and masterclasses led by experienced and acclaimed film professionals, offering valuable insights into the art and craft of filmmaking, as well as current industry trends and challenges.

Together, these platforms and initiatives reflect AFID's ongoing commitment to nurturing creative talent and empowering the next generation of storytellers in the Arab region.

**AFID will be held from
July 2nd to July 9th, 2025,
marking our 6th edition.**



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This project is supported by the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs as well as the French Institut in the framework of raising awareness on the creative cultural industries strategy.



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JURY



Dora Bouchoucha

Film Producer

Tunisia

A Tunisian film producer since 1994. She has produced and co-produced several award-winning documentaries, short and feature films including "Satin Rouge", "Buried Secrets" and "Foreign Body" by Raja Amari, "Inhebbek Hedi" , "Weldi" and "Behind the Mountains" by Mohamed Ben Attia.

Bouchoucha founded the SUD ECRITURE workshops in 1997, which she has been running since. She also founded the Carthage Film Festival (JCC) Projects' workshop in 1992 and headed JCC in 2008, 2010 and 2014. Moreover, she was the director of Manarat, Mediterranean festival in Tunisia in 2018, 2019 and 2021.

Bouchoucha is twice decorated by the Tunisian Republic to the highest rank of Grand Officer of the Republic and was awarded the Tahar Haddad Award for best Ambassador of Tunisian culture.

In Cannes 2015, she was named Commander of Arts and Letters by the French Minister of Culture. In addition to have been named member of the Commission for Individual Freedoms and Equality (COLIBE) by the President of the Republic of Tunisia in 2017.



Eduardo Guillot

Artistic Director
Spain

Eduardo Guillot has worked as a cultural journalist for more than thirty years and is the author of more than twenty books on topics related to culture. Member of the programming team at València Cinematheque from 2000 to 2006. International programming advisor for more than ten years at Abycine (Albacete) and Cinema Jove film festivals. Guillot was the Artistic Director of Mostra de València-Cinema del Mediterrani International Film Festival from 2018 to 2024, and now he's working as a technical advisor for Humans Fest and a member in FEPRISCI.



Joseph Bitamba

Director
Burundi

Joseph Bitamba is originally from Burundi, where he first worked for national television. He then completed several internships in Belgium, France and Burkina Faso. He earned a certificate in screenwriting from the École Internationale de Bordeaux, as well as a certificate in film production management at the INA in Paris. In 2003, Bitamba moved to Toronto, where he worked as a screenwriter and director, attended scriptwriting and documentary directing workshops organized by the NFB in Toronto. He directed documentaries, which have been broadcasted on Radio Canada, TFO, and TV5. Bitamba has worked as a director and journalist for TFO.



Linda Mutawi

Producer
Jordan

Linda Mutawi is a Jordanian producer with Palestinian roots. She has over 23 years of experience in the global film industry, working across the UK, US, UAE and Jordan. She co-founded Fikra, a Stockholm-based production company focused on cross-cultural projects between Scandinavia and the Middle East. Linda has produced and co-produced numerous acclaimed films, including collaborations with director Tarik Saleh on "The Nile Hilton Incident", "Boy from Heaven", and the latest "Eagles of the Republic". Previously, she played a key role in shaping Jordan's film industry as Head of Production Services at The Royal Film Commission - Jordan, managing international co-productions and the launch of the Jordan Film Fund. A graduate of the PGA Diversity Workshop and EAVE Producers Workshop, Mutawi continues to champion bold, global storytelling.

AFID Experts

Pitching Trainer

Amman Film
Industry Days



Stefano Tealdi

Pitching Trainer
Italy

Born in South Africa from Italian parents he established Stefilm in Turin, Italy, where he develops, produces or directs documentary one-offs, doc series and feature length dramas. Recently produced films: A Bastard and Pinochet's Legacy by Pepe Rovano (Special Mention, Sanfic 2023, Silkroad IFF Shanghai 2024); Amor by Virginia Eleuteri Serpieri (Mostra del Cinema di Venezia, IDFA Lumina 2023); Snajka: A Diary of Expectations by Tea Vidović Dalipi (Humand Rights Day – Sarajevo FF 2023; Rispet feature length fiction film by Cecilia Bozza Wolf (Bolzano FF, Trento FF and Baia del Silenzio – Redelfi Award, Riviera Intern. Ff 2023). When We Were Bullies by Jay Rosenblatt (short doc, Academy Award nomination 2022). Exemplary Behaviour (Golden Dove DOK Leipzig, FIPRESCI and Interreligious Award 2019); He directed: In The Belly of the City (doc series 29x52'). He tutors for Biennale Cinema and VR College Venice, Attagirl, Amman Film Industry, Cannes Docs, Documentary Campus, ESoDoc, La Fabrique Cinémas - Institute Francais, Factory, Films de 3 Continents – Produire au Sud, Imagination – Arab Film Scriptwriting, Jump In – Poitiers FF, Ouga Film Lab, Red Sea Lodge, RIDM- Montreal, TFL-Torino Film Lab, TRT-12 Punto, Scuola Holden, ZELIG Film School.

Pitching Platform Readers



Zeina Shanaah

Creative Producer
Jordan

Zeina is a creative producer with over 16 years of diverse experience in film, content & marketing industries. She played a key role in building the production business at VOX Cinemas & developing the company's first film slate of Arabic feature films which involved partnering with prolific producers & collaborating with & enabling talent across the MENA region. Films produced include *Voy,Voy,Voy!*, Egypt's submission to the 2023 Academy Awards & a box office success in the region. She holds a Phd in Film & Media Studies from SOAS in London which involved analysis of subversive film techniques in 21st century Arabic films. The study zooms in on the fundamental role of unconventional film form in conveying meaning & provoking thought.



Elias Khlát

Director, Screenwriter, and Producer
Lebanon

Elias Khlát, born in Tripoli, Lebanon, in 1965, is a documentary producer and director renowned for his significant contributions to Lebanon's cultural and cinematic landscape.

After studying Advertising Design, he established "Eklat" in 1991, Lebanon's first postproduction company, specializing in creative design, animation, and post-production projects.

In 2013, Elias founded the Tripoli Film Festival, aiming to revitalize the city's cultural scene by bringing international films and guests to a city recovering from the wounds of war. His dedication to cultural initiatives is further demonstrated through his involvement in various civil initiatives, organizing social and cultural events, empowering youth, and advocating for the preservation of Tripoli's cultural heritage.

Throughout his career, Elias has served as a jury member, consultant, programmer and film projects evaluator for numerous film festivals, both in Lebanon and internationally. He has also organized various cinema-related events and workshops, contributing to the global appreciation of Arab cinema.

Elias Khlát's unwavering commitment to the arts and his efforts to promote cultural exchange have solidified his reputation as a pivotal figure in Lebanon's film industry.

IEFTA is proud to continue our support with Amman International Film Festival at this year's Amman Film Industry Days (AFID).

TRIBUTE TO PAST WINNERS

This year, we take a moment to honour past winners and celebrate their remarkable achievements, showcasing how IEFTA's support in conjunction with AIFF has helped them gain the knowledge and recognition they truly deserve.

SUPPORT

IEFTA will be presenting once again a cash award worth €6,000 to a Project in Development at the Amman Film Industry Days Pitching Forum.



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SELECTED PROJECTS



JORDANIAN AWAL-FILM
DEVELOPMENT CATEGORY



From Temporary To Semi Permanent

Director **Bayan Abuta'ema**

Producer

Jordan, Palestine | Documentary

Total estimated budget (USD): 85,000

Secured financing (\$ or %): -

Contact Information

Bayan Abuta'ema | baranataema@gmail.com

Synopsis

From Temporary to Semi-Permanent is a quiet, observational documentary exploring life in Palestinian refugee camps across Jordan. Through intimate, unhurried visuals, the film captures the everyday rhythms of camp life while reflecting on themes of memory, exile, and place. It explores how time is experienced and remembered in spaces built to be temporary but have grown into complex, layered environments. Without narration or generalizations, the film lets

the environment speak for itself—where permanence is fragile, waiting persists, and identity is sustained through presence, repetition, and the subtle details of daily life.



Director's Biography

**Bayan
Abuta'ema**

Director's Intention

A Palestinian filmmaker, photo-video journalist, and storyteller based in Jordan. She holds a BA in Radio and Television and is a self-taught filmmaker drawn to personal, political, and visually driven narratives. Her work focuses on themes of displacement, identity, and collective memory, often rooted in the Palestinian experience. In 2021, she received awards from PLURAL+ and the United for Peace Film Festival, along with several other nominations, for her short film Error 017.

This film is my personal exploration of Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan—places where memory lives on and identity is constantly questioned. Through quiet everyday moments and the voices of ordinary people, I want to share how these spaces hold stories of belonging amid uncertainty, inviting viewers to connect with a deeper sense of home, history, and the layered reality of exile.

Goals of Participating:

Development grants, co-production, funding, and mentorship



The Last Mayor of Jerusalem

Director **Kinda Kurdi**

Producer **Brian Hill, Kinda Kurdi**

Production Company **K² Visual Media, Century Films Ltd**

Jordan, United Kingdom | Documentary

Total estimated budget (USD): 678,000

Secured financing (\$ or %): 5%

Contact Information

Kinda Kurdi | kinda@k2vm.com

Synopsis

The year is 1948, and intensive Israeli attacks have failed to capture East Jerusalem...

Underpinned by a never-before-seen videoed memoir from the city's last Palestinian mayor, this is an inspiring story of resistance, revival, and hope—told through the eyes of a man whose commitment lies in defending his people's sovereignty.



Director's Biography **Kinda Kurdi**

An award-winning filmmaker and TV producer with 16 years' experience creating documentaries and animation across multi-platforms. Her work has aired on various channels, including broadcast credits spanning the BBC, Cartoon Network, Channel 4 News, Ro'ya, and KTV.

Kinda's latest mid-length documentary is currently airing on Channel 4, *Guns, Gangs and Second Chances*, and is available on the 4 On Demand streaming platform. Her previous documentary short, *As Above So Below*, garnered her an award for Best Documentary Short at the EIFF Festival and was shortlisted at festivals in London, Venice, and the United States.

Director's Intention

This film is an extension of a legacy bestowed on me by my father, who is also a filmmaker, as the original exclusive interview with the mayor was filmed by him before I was born. My vision for the film is twofold: firstly, to link the past with the present and catalyse fundamental change in the perception of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict by providing insights into its true origins and the history of the struggle. But beyond that, I hope the life stories, ambitions, and sacrifices embodied by our main characters will create empathy, understanding, and admiration for the Palestinian people.



Producer's Note **Brian Hill**

It is often said that the past allows us to better understand the present and to think about the future. This is the case with *The Last Mayor of Jerusalem*, which, through its original cinematographic approach and the unique testimony of the last mayor of Jerusalem—filmed before the occupation of the city by Israel during the Six-Day War—brings to life a key moment in the history of this region. It is a look back at a political decision that still lies at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Goals of Participating:

Funders, Co-producing Partners, Broadcasters, Distributors



PRODUCED BY

GHASSAN SALTİ

DIRECTED BY

TAMIR NABER

SCRIPTWRITER

HAYA HUSSEINI

A TRUE STORY OF FOUR FREEDOM FIGHTERS.

Six 2 One

Director **Tamir Naber**

Producer **Ghassan Salti**

Jordan | Narrative

Total estimated budget (USD): 750,000

Secured financing (\$ or %): 14,000

Contact Information

Ghassan Salti | saltighassan@gmail.com

Synopsis

Based on an actual event on November 25, 1987. Four young Arab resistance fighters/ freedom fighters abandoned their lives to set off on hang gliders from Mount Hermon in South Lebanon to carry out an armed struggle operation on an Israeli military camp in northern occupied Palestine. One of the four fighters penetrated the military camp unchallenged and carried out a courageous act, killing six Israeli soldiers before being martyred.

The next day, young Palestinians took to the streets in uproar, inscribing graffiti reading "6:1" on Israeli building walls.

The First Intifada broke out a month after this operation.



Director's
Biography
Tamir Naber

Director's Intention

Tamir Naber is an award-winning Jordanian director, driven by a passion for stories of identity, belonging, and heritage. His work spans short films (Wonderful World, Define Over), award-winning commercials (IKEA Recipes, Samsung VR), and eight seasons directing Ahlan Simsim (Arabic Sesame Street). Tamir has also served as an assistant director on major global productions, including The Hurt Locker (2008) and Star Wars: Episode IX (2019). As a producer, his film The Chant (2024) earned multiple international awards. Tamir's cinematic vision bridges cultures, celebrating Arab stories with global impact.

I was drawn to this project by its powerful, real-life story—how freedom fighters from across the Arab world united to defy the odds in an extraordinary mission. My vision as a director is to bring heart, depth, and raw emotion to this film—revealing the humanity behind the mission: their hopes, fears, and quiet dreams. My long-standing experience with large-scale productions and storytelling will help shape a narrative that moves audiences, reminding them of the resilience of the human spirit and the power of unity in the face of oppression.



Producer's
Note
Ghassan Salti

Goals of Participating:

Funding - Partners - Co production

I was a young adult in 1987 when I first heard about this story.

At the time, I didn't fully grasp the weight of what had happened. But as the details of the operation emerged, and as history unfolded, it became clear that this moment was more than just a military act—it was a spark.

This got me thinking: Who were these people? What drove them to risk everything? The more I learned, the more I felt a deep responsibility to tell this story—not just as a historical event, but as a human story of resistance, Arab nationalism, and sacrifice.



The Orange Grove

Director **Murad Abu Eisheh**

Producer **Roger Frappier, Rula Nasser, Veronica Molnar**

Production Company **Max Films Inc. & The Imaginarium Films**

Canada, Jordan | Narrative

Total estimated budget (USD): 3,000,000

Secured financing (\$ or %): 18%

Contact Information

Veronika Molnar | Veronika.molnar@maxfilms.ca

Synopsis

Aziz, a gifted Arab theatre actor in NYC, is thrust into the lead role of Hecuba—a play about revenge that reawakens long-buried truths. Haunted by a lost brother and a stolen identity, he's forced to confront his past in Palestine. As performance and memory blur, the stage becomes his battleground for truth, redemption, and reclaiming the name he left behind.



Director's
Biography
**Murad Abu
Eisheh**

Director's Intention

Murad Abu Eisheh is a Jordanian filmmaker and member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. His breakout short *Tala'vision* won over 70 international awards, including a Student Academy Award and a shortlist spot for the 94th Oscars. His follow-up, *A Calling. From the Desert. To the Sea*, deepened his exploration of patriarchal control, resistance, and emotional repression in the Arab world. Murad's films blend urgency and lyricism, confronting injustice through intimate, character-driven narratives. His cinematic voice remains rooted in Arab realities, yet resonates globally with its emotional clarity and quiet, defiant power.

The Orange Grove is a deeply personal adaptation, rooted in my own experience abroad and the struggle to reclaim one's true self. I envision the film as a psychological thriller, where the tension of Aziz's unraveling identity is reflected in the rhythm of the present and echoes of his past. Through immersive visuals and a raw approach to performance, I want to pull the audience into Salim's fractured world—where theatre is not just a stage but a battleground for truth. I aim to create a film that journeys through brotherhood, loss, and the search for inner peace.



Producer's
Note
Rula Nasser

Goals of Participating:

Funders - Partners - Festivals - Markets

The Orange Grove is an international co-production led by acclaimed Canadian producer Roger Frappier (*The Power of the Dog*), in partnership with Jordan and Germany under official co-production treaties. Based on Larry Tremblay's bestselling novel—a staple in Quebec schools—the project is unique in reversing the usual dynamic by bringing Arab partners into a Western-led production from the outset. With Le Pacte handling international sales and MAD Solutions onboard for the MENA region, the film has strong market momentum. Directed by Jordanian-German filmmaker Murad Abu Eisheh, it represents a rare East-West collaboration rooted in authenticity, reciprocity, and a shared creative vision.

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SELECTED PROJECTS



ARAB FILMS
DEVELOPMENT CATEGORY



Alicante

Director **Lina Soualem**

Producer **Omar El Kadi**

Production Company **Easy Riders Films**

France, Algeria, Spain | Narrative

Total estimated budget (USD): 2,505,984.80

Secured financing (\$ or %): 6,834.50

Contact Information

Anatole Thillooy | anatole@easyridersfilms.com

Synopsis

Assia, a 30 year-old French-Algerian, just broke up with her long-time American partner, with whom she lived in New York City. In a state of confusion, she questions her life choices and her desire to become a mother. It's summertime, and she decides to join her parents, Amina and Farid, in Spain as they just opened a restaurant popular seaside resort near Alicante. Arriving at the airport in Alicante, Assia has no idea what she's in for. What was meant to be a family vacation

turns into a rescue operation for a fragile business and a shaky family equilibrium.



Director's Biography

Lina Soualem

Director's Intention

After studying History and Political Science at La Sorbonne University, Lina worked as a programmer. Lina's debut feature documentary *Their Algeria* premiered in *Visions du Réel* 2020. Lina acted in four feature films and contributed to the writing of the TV series *Oussekiné* (Disney+). Her second documentary, *Bye Bye Tiberias* premiered in 2023 in Venice International Film Festival. The film was chosen to represent Palestine at the Oscars 2024, was nominated as Best Documentary at the 2024 Film Independent Spirit Awards, at the European Film Awards 2024 and at the 2025 César in France.

Alicante allows me to explore themes that interest me : transmission in exile, colonial trauma, finding your place in the world as a woman, mother, daughter. I chose Spain as it's very inspiring visually. *Alicante* is full of Algerians and it faces Oran in Algeria, on the other side of the Mediterranean. Algeria in the film appears through language, conversations and symbols. As an absent that is constantly present. The film's tone oscillate between family drama and dramatic comedy, because in all our family stories, sometimes it's only humor that save us —or at least allow us to keep up appearances.



Producer's Note

Omar El Kadi

Goals of Participating:

I had the chance to collaborate with Lina on her previous films, which I distributed across the Arab world. The films resonated deeply in the region, and our friendship deepened through shared travels and conversations about exile, identity, and cultural balance.

What interests us in *Alicante* is deconstructing stereotypes around the representation of Algerians in France, often linked to suburbs or integration struggles. Lina chose to show a different reality. Filming a French-Algerian family in Spain restores their right to complexity, portraying them not in opposition to an identity or a place, but simply as expatriates adapting to a new environment. *Alicante* furthers our artistic and political engagement.

Recieve financial support for the development phase

Recieve feedbacks on the film

Exchange with international coproducers, sales agents, distributors and financiers



Like A Bird in The Sky

Director **Amal Ramsis**

Producer **Jana Wehbe, Amal Ramsis**

Production Company **The Attic Productions, Kalketa Àrabe**

Egypt, Lebanon, Spain | Narrative

Total estimated budget (USD): 939,745

Secured financing (\$ or %): 46337,4

Contact Information

Jana Wehbe | jana@theatticproductions.com

Synopsis

In a popular Cairo neighborhood, on separate rooftops, Habiba, Sara and Zeina, decide to delve into a man's game in which pigeons are released into the sky only to be lured back into nets set up by rivals. While engaging in this rebellious act, and facing different rejections that threaten to halt their pursuit, each of them embarks on an ethereal dream journey, traversing diverse landscapes, flying over deserts, palm tree fields, and lush green mountains. These dreams propel them

forward in time, and take them into the next 20 years of their lives, offering glimpses into their future stories.



Director's Biography

Amal Ramsis

Director's Intention

Amal Ramsis is a filmmaker and founder of the Between Women Filmmakers' Caravan (Egypt). In 2002 she got a scholarship from the AECID (Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo) to study cinema in "Séptima Aras" in Madrid.

In 2009 she was the holder of the Chair of Arts and Cultures of the Euro-Arab Foundation in Granada. As a filmmaker, her films "Only Dreams" (2005), "Forbidden" (2011), "The Trace of the Butterfly" (2015), and "You Come From Far Away" (2018) have got several awards and been screened in many international festivals.

This film is born from the inspiration of a recurring dream I had many years ago; I would soar weightless. It was a reflection of my spirit at the time; a rebellious young woman unafraid to embrace risks. However, as the years passed, I found myself caught up in the routines and responsibilities and the dream ceased to visit me. A few years ago, I experienced an inspiring feeling when I observed a flock of pigeons traversing the sky in Cairo. It was only that I once again tasted the wondrous sensation of weightlessness and I wrote this film.



Producer's Note

Jana Wehbe Amal Ramsis

The project *Like a Bird in the Sky* resonates with me as both a producer and an advocate for impactful narratives. Following Habiba, Sara, and Zeina as they challenge societal norms in the male-dominated sport of pigeon racing, the film explores rebellion, dreams, and the socio-cultural dynamics faced by young Egyptian women. This timely narrative highlights profound issues while providing a platform for their stories. Having collaborated with Amal on previous projects, I admire her dedication to empowering bold storytellers, especially her remarkable work with women. My goal is to ensure the film is a creative success while seeking partnerships, funding, and implementation.

Goals of Participating:

Co-producers, Funding, partners, development labs



LOVE-45

Director **Anas Khalaf**

Producer **Marine Vaillant**

Production Company **Special Touch Studios**

France, Switzerland, Syria, Qatar, UK, Lebanon | Narrative

Total estimated budget (USD): 1,600,000

Secured financing (\$ or %): 800,000

Contact Information

Marine Vaillant | mvaillant@specialtouchstudios.com

Synopsis

Walid, an overweight Lebanese man, is caught in a destructive spiral. He works at his uncle's tennis club but is sent away to build a tennis court. His encounters with Laith and Maya, with whom Walid shares more than he thinks, lead him to find the path back towards hope.



Director's
Biography
Anas Khalaf

Anas Khalaf is a French-Syrian filmmaker currently residing in Doha after fleeing Syria with his family in 2012 following the onset of the war in his home country. He graduated from the Normandy Business School. Together with his wife, Rana Kazkaz, they founded the production company Synéastes Films in 2010. They have collaborated on four short films and one feature film.

Director's
Intention

Nourished by my personal experiences, my love for tennis and my complicated relationship with food, this film questions us on the aftermath of conflicts.

What has been going on in the region over the past years shows us a new cycle of violence. Behind the broken buildings, there are so many broken lives.

I wanted to explore all that tennis symbolizes, a sport of self-reflection and introspection that can bring one out of the shadows.

Love-45 is a story of encounters and attempts at healing amidst societies being torn apart.



Producer's
Note
Marine Vaillant

Love-45 is a unique and daring film of hope, that wishes to take the counter step on topics and characters, through the themes of transmission and healing.

The result is a promise of a humorous and human movie, addressing at the same time painful subjects, around food disorders and the sequels of war.

This deeply universal film is drawn from Anas Khalaf's personal experiences, that he managed to develop into an endearing story.

This film can reach a wide audience as an author's film with commercial value.

Goals of Participating:

Sales Agent, Broadcaster, funders, distribution.



Ping-Pong

Director **Saleh Saadi**

Producer **May Jabareen**

Production Company **Philistine Films**

Palestine | Narrative

Total estimated budget (USD): 450,000

Secured financing (\$ or %): -

Contact Information

Saleh Saadi | saleh.saady678@gmail.com

Synopsis

As the war on Gaza erupts, a few kilometers away in the occupied 48 territories, grief weighs heavily on Issam, who is still reeling from his brother's passing a year prior. He finds unexpected solace in nightly ping-pong tournaments hosted by his neighbor, forging a friendship that helps him confront his sorrow and rediscover resilience amidst the chaos.



Director's
Biography
Saleh Saadi

Director's Intention

Saleh Saadi is a Palestinian writer-director from Basmat Tab'un, Palestine. Saadi's first short fiction film *Borekas* was part of the Official Selection of the Palm Springs International ShortFest (2021), his second short film *A'lam*, which he wrote, directed and acted in premiered in the Hollyshorts Film Festival (2022). Saadi was a participant in the 2022 edition of The Middle East Media Initiative (MEMI), a TV writing program at the USC School of Cinematic Arts, where he started writing his first TV show, *Dyounf*. He has also begun developing his debut narrative feature *Ping-Pong*.

Ping-Pong was born out of our suffocating reality. It is deeply personal, rooted in the helplessness I felt staying home with my parents, grappling with our privilege of shelter, food, and togetherness while our people are massacred. The constant hum of warplanes reminded us of collective grief. Amidst despair emerged resilience. Slowly we found ways to cope. It began with shared silence, watching the news together with wordless dread. We sought distractions: philosophical conversations, card games and ping-pong. These moments became lifelines, letting us momentarily escape reality, they were not denial but survival - ways to reclaim humanity and find joy together. *Ping-Pong* reflects this duality, the tension between human connection's warmth and grief's crushing weight.



Producer's
Note
May Jabareen

Goals of Participating:

Co-producing partner, Funding, Development labs/workshops, Script advisor, Pitching opportunities.

Ping-Pong captures a familiar state: wrestling with grief, trauma, and war's echoes. In Issam's turmoil, I see what many have faced - some coping, others searching for calm amid chaos. Saleh explores intimate, human moments - ritual, laughter, play - as quiet acts of resilience. He brings tenderness to the portrayal of Palestinian resilience. Sound is central: not background, but emotional force, from warplanes' thrum to the ping-pong's rhythm, connecting memory, presence and hope. We want audiences to feel Issam's world. I look forward to walking with him, discovering fragile yet vital moments that remind us why we continue.



PRINTEMPS

Director **Noel Keserwany**

Producer **Michelle and Noel Keserwany**

Production Company **BARR**

Lebanon, France | Narrative

Total estimated budget (USD): 900,000

Secured financing (\$ or %): -

Contact Information

Noel Keserwany | noelkeserwany@gmail.com

Synopsis

Soha, an ambitious and eloquent woman in her late 20s, works in a perfume shop in Jounieh, Lebanon, selling fake replicas of luxury brands. Alongside her parents and sister, she spends the winters in a small seaside resort meant for summer visitors, living out of sync with both her age and the seasons. When a TV crew filming a popular rom-com takes shelter in her shop on a rainy day, Soha sees a chance to seize the moment and finally live her age. But chasing

that moment pulls her into a world where the line between ambition and integrity begins to blur.



Director's Biography **Noel Keserwany**

Noel Keserwany is a Lebanese multidisciplinary artist, known for her satirical political music videos created with her sister Michelle since 2012. Their debut short film, *Les Chenilles*, which Noel co-directed and starred in, became the first Arab film to win the Golden Bear at Berlinale 2023. In 2020, Noel was selected by the French Institute for a writing residency at La Cité des Arts in Paris. Since then, she has been based between Lebanon and Paris.

Noel is currently developing her first feature film, *Printemps*, and is also directing and co-producing her animated short film, *Seven Mountains and Seven Seas*.

Director's Intention

Printemps is set in the world I grew up in: Jounieh, Lebanon. To be closer to school, like Soha's family in the film, my family rented a vacation apartment off-season. We were aware that by summer, we'd have to leave. My friends and I felt out of sync with our age. We often put ourselves in situations that pushed the limits of humor to the point of absurdity, trying to catch up with the delay. This delay echoes throughout the film across different age groups. *Printemps* portrays a break from that cycle: a bold, free story in tone and form.



Producer's Note **Michelle Keserwany**

Barr is a young production company founded by us sisters, Michelle, Angèle, and Noel Keserwany, in Lebanon, with the vision of co-producing our films locally in collaboration with international and Arab partners. *Printemps* is a deeply personal project for the three of us, set in Amwaj Resort, where we once lived as a family. The film carries echoes of the bond between two sisters and is shaped by the people and environment we grew up around. This allows us to craft a production that feels both authentic and deeply rooted, true to the film's origins in both process and outcome.

Goals of Participating:

Development funding. Co-production.
Distribution. Writing residency.



The Cow Thief

Director **Mohamed Zedan**

Producer **Mark Lotfy**

Production Company **Rufy's Films & Figleaf Studios**

Egypt, Italy, KSA | Documentary

Total estimated budget (USD): 350,000

Secured financing (\$ or %): 60,000

Contact Information

Mohamed Zedan | zedan.rufys@gmail.com

Synopsis

While investigating the unsolved 1980s murder of Egyptian director Niazi Mostafa, filmmaker Zidan stumbles upon a deeper mystery: the disappearance of a lost Egyptian screenplay believed to have inspired Vittorio De Sica's iconic film *Bicycle Thieves*. The script, titled *The Cow Thief*, was written by Kamal Selim, a pioneer of Egyptian realism, who died under suspicious circumstances decades earlier. Zidan's journey takes him to Italy, where he meets Bruno, the estranged son of Imam, a

former Egyptian associate suspected of both stealing the script and being involved in Selim's death. As Zidan uncovers archival evidence and confronts the sons of renowned Italian directors, tensions rise. His creative methods blur the line between fact and fiction, pushing collaborators away and threatening the project. Haunted by questions of censorship, cultural erasure, and artistic freedom, Zidan must decide whether to abandon the film or confront the uncomfortable truths he has uncovered.



Director's
Biography
Mohamed Zedan

Mohamed Zidan is an Egyptian director, producer, and editor based in Alexandria. A graduate of the Jesuit Film School, he has worked in cinema since 2010 and participated in the Sharjah Biennial. He is the founder of Rufy's Film Production and teaches film history while supporting emerging filmmakers. His co-directed debut, *The Mice Room*, screened at Dubai and São Paulo festivals. His documentary *I Have a Picture* won awards at El Gouna, the National Film Festival, and Sharjah Film Platform.

He is currently working on directing his third feature film, "The Cow Thief".

Director's Intention

The Cow Thief is a documentary born from a fleeting mention that led to a long investigation into a forgotten cinematic project. It explores how stories vanish—not only by external forces but through internal hesitation, fear, and silence. Built on archival materials and fragmented memories, the film questions the blurred line between fact and fiction, presence and erasure. Rather than accuse, it reflects on missed possibilities and the barriers—visible and invisible—that prevent creative visions from reaching light. The Cow Thief is a cinematic game, an investigation, a mirror through which we reexamine our collective memory, our relationship with authority, the West, and ourselves.

It is not a call to believe or deny but a call to think, to question, to dismantle—grounded in evidence and driven by sincere doubt.



Producer's
Note
Mark Lotfy

When I first heard the story from Zedan, I was immediately drawn to Kamal Selim—a true artist who defied authority but was silenced by oppression. His struggle feels painfully relevant today, as imagination remains constrained by fear and control. The Cow Thief confronts this reality through a smartly crafted hybrid narrative, exposing how cinema and politics intertwine to shape myths that serve power. This satirical yet emotional journey sheds light on an Arab crisis with global resonance—blending truth, absurdity, and dark humor. Though still in development, the film's potential is undeniable: bold, unsettling, and urgently necessary.

Goals of Participating:

Funders, partners, pitching platforms.



أسرار الجمال والسحر

THE MASTERS OF MAGIC AND BEAUTY

A FILM BY JAD CHAHINE

THE MASTERS OF MAGIC AND BEAUTY

Director **Jad Chahine**

Producer **Baho Bakhsh, Safei Eldin Mahmoud**

Production Company **Red Star Films**

Egypt | Narrative

Total estimated budget (USD): **1,384,111**

Secured financing (\$ or %): **40%**

Contact Information

Baho Bakhsh - Red Star Films

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b.bakhsh@redstarfilms.net

jadchahiine@gmail.com

Synopsis

In a mythic desert world, Nabaweya and her husband Hemdan seek magical help to conceive after a miscarriage. A mystical Master, Badeea, gives Nabaweya a magical herb to ensure pregnancy—warning that Hemdan must not eat it. He does, however, and mysteriously becomes pregnant, giving birth to a daughter, Narguis. Fearing shame, the couple considers abandoning her, but Badeea offers a choice: keep Narguis or face infertility. They flee to a distant

village, where Nabaweya births another child, Gabbal. As Narguis grows, tragedy unfolds through jealousy, forbidden love, and a cursed prophecy, reshaping the destinies of Hemdan's entire family.



Director's
Biography
Jad Chahine

Director's
Intention

Jad Chahine, is an Egyptian filmmaker. After graduating from the Higher Institute of Cinema in Egypt (2018). He worked in several independent films and collaborated as an assistant director, and casting director with the Egyptian filmmaker Yousry Nasrallah. His short film, "AL TORAA' (THE CALL OF THE BROOK), which was the first Egyptian film to be selected for the LA CINEF competition since 2014.

Jad is currently in the post-production phase for his second short film, "My Village Blames Women for the End of Mankind," as well as working on the development of his first feature, "The Masters of Magic and Beauty"

My grandmother's folktales—filled with magical powers, mythical creatures, and monsters punishing disobedience—didn't scare me. Instead, they freed my imagination. Inspired by those stories, my feature-length project, *The Masters of Magic and Beauty*, follows a man who, due to a mistake, becomes pregnant instead of his wife. This "original sin" curses his bloodline for three generations. The film builds its own mythological universe, drawing from my grandmother's tales and global legends. I reimagine these to explore taboo themes like religion, tradition, patriarchy, gender roles, sex, love, and power—creating a world that resonates independently, without relying on specific cultural references.



Producer's
Note
Baho Bakhsh
Safei Eldin Mahmoud

Jad Chahine was casting director for two of Yousry Nasrallah's recent projects—a testament to his talent. When he presented his film-school project, *The Call of the Brook*, nominated for the Cinefondation Award at the 76th Cannes Film Festival, it was clear he had a bold vision. Egypt's cinema has yet to fully tap into its vast trove of myths and folktales. Jad's work does just that, revitalizing the form. When he shared the script for *Masters of Magic and Beauty*, we were compelled to join, along with supporting his upcoming short, *My Village Blamed Women for the End of Mankind*.

Goals of Participating:
Festivals, platforms, co-production, and distribution.



THE SAD LIFE OF HAPPY PIG !

Director **Christy Whaibe**

Producer **Christelle Younes**

Production Company **Bittersweet Pictures**

Lebanon, France | Narrative

Total estimated budget (USD): 1,100,220

Secured financing (\$ or %): 35,000

Contact Information

Christelle Younes | contact@btrswtpictures.com

Synopsis

Chady, a 32-year-old theater director in Beirut, scrapes by performing at events in a clumsy pig costume as "Happy Pig." The son of an assassinated journalist, Chady plans to leave Lebanon for good after being selected to showcase his latest play at a French festival. But as Lebanon faces tense parliamentary elections, he crosses paths with Lea, a bold environmental activist investigating corruption dating back to the civil war era. She's determined to uncover

an article his father was preparing before his mysterious death. This encounter drags Chady into a past he thought he had buried, forcing him to question everything.



Director's
Biography
Christy Whaibe

Director's
Intention

Christy Whaibe is a Franco-Lebanese filmmaker who started her audiovisual studies in Beirut, directing her first short film, *His Name is a Long Story*. After working as a freelance assistant director, she pursued a Master's degree at ENSAV in Toulouse, France. In 2017, she directed her second short, *Appel en Absence*, and later wrote her third short film, *Tout Va Bien!*. She also directed a short for the collective project *Letters*, alongside other Lebanese filmmakers. Her first feature film, *The Sad Life of a Happy Pig!*, is currently in development, supported by writing workshops and co-production market selections. Christy is currently finalizing the script with a writing consultant.

In 2015, I left Lebanon for France—fleeing heart-break and the suffocating chaos of my homeland. From Toulouse, I watched Lebanon unravel: economic collapse, revolution, the port explosion, war. I was overwhelmed by helplessness and guilt. This film is my way of confronting exile, of exploring wounds deeply shared by my generation. Lebanon's history is fractured—there is no official account of the 1975 civil war. We wear masks to survive in a society where warlords became politicians. My film delves into this tension.



Producer's
Note
**Christelle
Younes**

This film is not my first collaboration with Christy. I previously produced *Appel en Absence*, which we shot in Toulouse. Christy has a distinctive style in her work: she approaches dramatic subjects with finesse and levity, often using sarcasm and dark humor. This unique tone is what best defines her debut feature film.

The film explores the love-hate relationship that Chady—like many others—feels toward Lebanon, a place both fascinating and tormented, still ruled by the same warlords decade after decade. Chady reflects too the emotional struggle that Lebanese independent artists endure.

Goals of Participating:

Co-production. Funding. Festivals & distribution. Feedback for visibility.



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SELECTED PROJECTS

POST-PRODUCTION
CATEGORY



ALL THAT THE WIND CAN CARRY

Director **Maged Nader**

Producer **Tamer Elsaid and Maged Nader**

Production Company **Co-production: Red Star**
Associate producer: Baho Bakash -
Safei Eldin Mahmoud

Egypt, Qatar | Drama

Total estimated budget (USD): 210,000

Secured financing (\$ or %): 150,000

Contact Information

Maged Nader | magednader99@gmail.com

Synopsis

As Susana develops memory loss and dementia, her present begins to blur with fragments of photographs, home videos, dreams, and hallucinations. Her illness unearths a long-buried incident from her family's past, opening up an unending question about memory, time, and loss.



Director's Biography **Maged Nader**

Director's Intention

Graduated from the High Cinema Institute with a bachelor's degree in film directing. Nader has fifteen years of experience as a film director and cinematographer; his recent projects include the acclaimed feature films "Souad" and "Abo Zaabal 89," both of which have garnered international attention - his work was screened at festivals such as Cannes, Berlin, IDFA, Rotterdam & more. Nader also has five years of experience in cultural management, having worked as a project coordinator and film lab manager at Cimatheque - Alternative Film Center from 2013 to 2019, before advancing to the position of co-executive director from 2020 to 2023

I was born in a moment that went unnoticed by my grandmother who had been suffering from Dementia. When I was 18, we had to move her to an elderly home dedicated to dementia patients inside a Coptic monastery. I did not see her again until her death. However, the day of her loss remains deeply engraved in my being. The film aims to tackle themes of memory, family, loss and personal narrative. Yet I wish to explore this question through the lens of family, as I highly believe in the importance of tracing family analytically and artistically.



Producer's Note **Tamer Elsaid** **Maged Nader**

What intrigues me most in filmmaking is the filmmaker's adventure in creating an alternative cinematic form, intellectual content, or production model.

This film embarks on that adventure on all three levels. It raises questions about memory—an often neglected theme in Egyptian cinema. Consequently, in its artistic form, it aspires to experiment with a new cinematic language that blends different mediums to explore the nature of memory.

Moreover, it takes a bold step in its production model. With a minimal crew and a small budget, Maged seeks to realize his cinematic vision without compromise, presenting a potential model for what a first feature film can be.

Goals of Participating:
Funders, Distribution



AMAL

Director **Khaled Al Swidan**

Producer **Rahmeh AL- Shammass**

Jordan, Syria | Documentary

Total estimated budget (USD): 154,000

Secured financing (\$ or %): 26%

Contact Information

Rahmeh AL-Shammass | rahmeddeb@gamil.com

Synopsis

After Amal's failed marriage to the groom from Sweden, and her sister Baraa's involvement in a series of short-term marriages following her escape from the camp, the sisters find themselves trapped in a vicious cycle of child marriage trauma—a legacy passed from one generation to the next like an inescapable fate.



Director's
Biography
**Khaled Al
Swidan**

Director's Intention

Khaled is a Syrian cinematographer and director. He studied filmmaking and is currently continuing his studies at the Film Academy Baden-Württemberg. He worked on the films *The Point Men* (2023) and *Tala'vision* (2021), and served as the cinematographer for the film *Harvest Moon*. He directed his short documentary *Equinox* (2025).

In 2011, I fled the Syrian war to the Jordanian desert, where drugs, violence, and child marriage were the norm. When I was young, I agreed—without understanding—to my sister's marriage. She was just a child. Later, she returned home a divorced mother of two. I've always felt responsible.

After studying filmmaking, I dedicated my first feature documentary to this issue. My wife and I met Amal and Bara'a, whose story mirrored my sister's—full of struggle and resilience. Inspired by their strength, I helped them share their story through cinema—just as film once helped transform my own life.



Producer's
Note
**Rahmeh Al-
Shammas**

Goals of Participating: Funders, Co Producers.

Amal is a poignant documentary that highlights the struggles of young girls in refugee camps, focusing on the emotional and social impact of child marriage. Inspired by the director's personal experience, the film follows Amal and Baraa's journey of resilience and hope. Through intimate storytelling and powerful visuals, it sheds light on silenced voices and harmful traditions, urging communities to rethink and challenge these practices.



ASPHALT

Director **Hamza Hamideh**

Producer **Mahmoud Massad**

Jordan | Documentary

Total estimated budget (USD): 110,000

Secured financing (\$ or %): 72,000

Contact Information

Hamza Hamideh | hamidehhamza80@gmail.com

Synopsis

Amid the escalating war in Gaza, 20-year-old Debs, a Palestinian refugee from the Baqa'a camp in Jordan, dreams of marrying his beloved. But as chaos and destruction unfold, he is forced to postpone the wedding, mourning the loss of relatives in Gaza—one after another.

Debs embodies the suffering of an entire generation that has grown up in exile, shaped by decades of displacement and life within Palestinian refugee camps.



Director's Biography **Hamza Hamideh**

Hamza holds a B.A. in Software Engineering from the University of Zarqa. His passion for photography began in his childhood neighborhood of Hashmi Shamali, eventually growing into a deep interest in visual storytelling. He took part in several filmmaking workshops in Amman organized by the U.S. Embassy, Al Jazeera, and the Royal Film Commission. In 2024, he was selected by the RFC to attend an international workshop in Los Angeles. In 2025, he won three awards at the Cannes Doc Festival for a documentary he directed.

Director's Intention

As a Jordanian filmmaker, I aim to illuminate isolated communities and refugee camps long overlooked. This concealed world merits attention, and I believe regional and international audiences will find its stories compelling.

Asphalt seeks to resonate globally and foster dialogue on displacement and resilience. We plan to premiere at major film festivals, pursue distribution through broadcasters and streaming platforms, and host additional screenings at cultural and educational events to extend the film's reach and spark meaningful conversations.



Producer's Note **Mahmoud Massad**

As a producer, I'm dedicated to telling stories like Asphalt, which explores the human experience within Palestinian displacement. The film follows Debs in Baqaa refugee camp as he faces emotional challenges and pursues his dreams amid political instability. Asphalt is a tribute to resilience, highlighting the impact of conflict on individuals and communities. It emphasizes hope, unity, and the power of storytelling to build empathy. Through this film, I aim to shed light on untold Palestinian narratives and help amplify their voices on an international level.

Goals of Participating:

Gap financing, buyers, sales.



KOBRA

Director **Daniel Habib**

Producer **Sarah Saab**

Production Company **Nightmare Curator**

Lebanon | Narrative

Total estimated budget (USD): 200,000

Secured financing (\$ or %): 90%

Contact Information

Daniel Habib | dchabib@gmail.com

Synopsis

Consumed by revenge, Kobra will stop at nothing until she takes down Beirut's crime king, Boss Atme. With the legendary criminal having become a ghost in his later years, Kobra sets her sights on everything—and everyone—he ever cared about.



Director's Biography

Daniel Habib

Daniel Habib is a writer, producer, and director from Beirut, Lebanon. He is the co-founder of Last Floor Productions and the co-creator of five acclaimed TV series. In 2022, he co-directed *It Gets Darker*, an award-winning short film that received multiple accolades from film festivals around the world.

Director's Intention

As a kid in Beirut, cinema was my escape. I grew up devouring everything from *Al Erhab wal Kebab* to *The Godfather*, never caring about genre—only story. But in film school, I was told my favorite films were “lesser,” too commercial, not “real” cinema.

KOBRA is my response to that. A love letter to the thrillers that shaped me, told through an unapologetically Arab lens. Influenced by Tarantino, Park Chan-wook, and Scorsese, it's our *Kill Bill*—bold, stylized, and deeply local.

It's time we stop choosing between art and genre. KOBRA is proudly both.



Producer's Note

Sarah Saab

We're proud to present KOBRA—a star-studded Lebanese feature film produced to international standards. This bold revenge thriller follows one woman's war against Beirut's most powerful crime family, blending high-octane storytelling with striking visuals. Influenced by Tarantino and Scorsese, KOBRA remains deeply rooted in Mediterranean culture and identity.

More than just a film, KOBRA is a statement from a new wave of Arab filmmakers and a celebration of fearless, female-led storytelling. We invite you to join us in championing Lebanese cinema and bringing this powerful story to global audiences.

Goals of Participating:

Festivals, Distribution, Partners.



TESTOSTERONE

Director **Ali Benchechrone and Mohamed Bakrim**

Producer **Ali Benchechrone and Mohamed Bakrim**

Production Company **1989 Film**

Morocco | Narrative

Total estimated budget (USD): 110,000

Secured financing (\$ or %): 55%

Contact Information

Ali Benchechrone | ali.benchechrone@gmail.com

Synopsis

Indebted to the ruthless Walid, fitness coach Karim turns to his crypto-scammer friend Sami for help—but when unhinged nephew Anas crashes the party, a riotous showdown of toxic masculinity and mayhem erupts.



Director's Biography

**Ali
Benchekroune
Mohamed Bakrim**

Ali Benchekroune and Mohamed Bakrim's careers first intersected at the Marrakech Film School, where both graduated with honors. After years spent honing their craft through individual short films and music videos, their paths converged once again for their debut feature, *TESTOSTERONE*. The film reflects their shared ambition: to explore toxic male relationships and their devastating consequences.

Director's Intention

Testosterone is our challenge to *roujoula*—the restrictive box of manhood. Driven to create energetic, impactful, and accessible cinema, we explore how societal pressures stifle masculine authenticity, questioning the balance between vulnerability and strength. Having navigated these expectations ourselves, we examine the ethical use of power and its consequences on individuals and communities.

Our cinematic style translates these culturally specific pressures into universally understood human struggles, ensuring our reflections on identity resonate powerfully with audiences everywhere.

Producer's Note

**Ali
Benchekroune
Mohamed Bakrim**

As producers, *Testosterone* is our response to a critical void in Arab cinema—where honest portrayals of male relationships remain scarce. This is our passion letter: a raw, electrifying push against the limits of conventional storytelling. The film dives headfirst into these dynamics, dissecting their physical, spiritual, emotional, and financial toll with unfiltered vision and intent.

Our professional mission is to build a slate that addresses industry gaps and delivers cinema that both confronts and connects—locally and globally.

Goals of Participating:

Our goals are to secure essential support and build connections with sales agents and distributors for a global release. We also aim to leverage the pitching platform to engage both the jury and industry professionals, with the objective of securing critical funding.



YOU DON'T DIE TWO TIMES

Director **Ager Oueslati**

Producer **Raouf Oueslati, Thomas Kaske, Dhia Jerbi**

Production Company **Taswir Productions, Seera Films, Muja Films**

Algeria, Germany, France, Tunisia | Documentary

Total estimated budget (USD): 234,281

Secured financing (\$ or %): 142,447

Contact Information

Ager Oueslati | ageroueslati@gmail.com

Synopsis

One night, a strange dream wakes Gift. Is it a sign of a foretold death? She embarks on the perilous odyssey of a journey toward Europe. In this adaptation of the Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead, we uncover an intimate portrait of Gift—her fears, her strength, and her search for meaning.



Director's
Biography
Ager Oueslati

Ager Oueslati is a Franco-Algerian-Tunisian journalist, filmmaker, and photographer. She graduated from the École Supérieure de Journalisme Pro Lille-Montpellier and received alternating training at France Télévision. In 2016, she set out to document the migration journeys of women. In 2019, she directed her first short documentary film, *Exiled*. In Algeria, she co-founded Taswir Production, a film production company that she co-directs with Raouf Oueslati. Her upcoming documentary film, *You Don't Die Two Times*, is scheduled for release in 2026.

Director's Intention

You Don't Die Two Times is my first creative documentary, born from the desire to move beyond journalistic objectivity and explore a more sensitive, personal, and aesthetic form of storytelling. Inspired by analog photography and the chiaroscuro of Renaissance painting, I use images as vessels of emotion and meaning.

The film follows Gift, a Nigerian migrant, whose journey is part of a broader and tragic contemporary history. By blending documentary reality with the symbolism of the Egyptian Book of the Dead, I aim to transform a personal path into a universal myth—evoking empathy by revealing the deep humanity behind migration stories.



Producer's
Note
Raouf Oueslati
Thomas Kaske
Dhia Jerbi

My name is Dhia Jerbi, producer at Muja Films in Marseille and Tunis. I believe in cinema's power to tell nuanced, human-centered stories.

With *You Don't Die Two Times*, I was struck by Ager Oueslati's unique vision and her deep, personal connection to the protagonist, Gift. Her film continues the rich tradition of Algerian documentary, offering a vital and non-Eurocentric perspective.

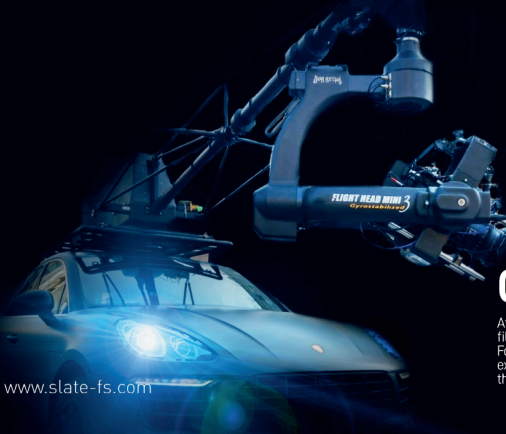
In a media landscape often dominated by dehumanizing narratives, this project stands out as a personal, artistic, and essential portrayal of migration and our shared humanity.

Goals of Participating:

Festivals, funders, distribution, and pre-sales.



MASNA3 is a creative lab dedicated to developing bold and original screenwriting across all formats — fiction, documentary, series, and experimental work. Rooted in the Arab world and open to international exchange, **Masna3** supports emerging and independent voices through script labs, consulting, workshops, and development grants. Meaning “**factory**” in Arabic, Masna3 is a place of transformation where stories are shaped with precision, freedom, and artistic ambition. It stands at the intersection of cinema, social engagement, and creative writing, offering a space for writers to craft narratives that challenge, reflect, and resonate. Initiated by a collective of established Arab and international filmmakers and screenwriters, **MASNA3** is based in Tunis.



SLATE
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At Slate Film Services, furthering creativity is our main goal. We believe in the potential of the Jordanian film industry and strive to support a new generation of filmmakers. For over a decade, Slate has been a dependable production arm in the region through its knowledge, experience, available equipment and connections. By delivering first-rate services and contributing to the production of many award-winning international feature films, we have become the lead in the market.

The Spark Series Showcase

أجساد على الهامش

Bodies on the Margins

CREATED BY **MARIA GHAFARY**

BODIES ON THE MARGINS



Director
Maria Ghafary



Producer
Marian Abou Elias

Production Company **Femalecomms (NGO)**

Lebanon

Contact Information

Maria Ghafary | mnghafary@gmail.com

Synopsis

Bodies on the Margins is a poetic docuseries that follows the personal journeys of four Arab women from diverse age groups. Through intimate storytelling, each woman reflects on how her body has been shaped by, and has shaped, her life experiences. From youth to maturity, their narratives ex-

plore themes of identity, sexuality, resilience, and societal expectations. "Bodies on the Margins" examines what it means to be a woman in a patriarchal society.



LUNA'S STORY



Director
Laith Al-Hijjawi



Producer
Issam Hijjawi

Production Company **Issam Hijjawi production house**

Jordan

Contact Information

laith hijjawi | esamhijjawi@yahoo.com
halahijjawig6@outlook.com

Synopsis

The series begins when Luna decides to recount her love story with Kenan at a cancer support group center. They suffer the same pain and share the same suffering, yet they both view life with optimism and believe that hope can be born from suffering. Together, they strive to fulfill simple but, in

their view, great wishes, even though time is not on their side. This time, they enter into a struggle not just with disease but with the hours and seconds. The work also directly highlights a group of young men and women from Arab families who came to Jordan for cancer treatment.



OUR FAMILY LIFE - ABU SANAD'S FAMILY



Director
**Cynthia Madanat
Sharaiha**



Producer
Shadi Sharaiha

Production Company **Digitales**

Jordan

Contact Information

Nadia Hussein | nadia.husseini@digitalesmedia.com

Synopsis

Our Family Life: Abu Sanad's Family is a heart-warming animated web series set in Jordan, following Abu Sanad, Um Sanad, and their three children - Sanad, Sally, baby Samer, and their neighbors. With humor and emotional depth, the series captures the everyday joys and challenges of modern Arab family life. Each short

episode explores themes of friendship, love, resilience, and connection, offering an authentic and relatable glimpse into family, school, work, and community life. Celebrated for its universal appeal and cultural richness, Our Family Life presents a refreshing and uplifting portrayal of family in the Arab world



EL'SARDINES



Director
Zoulikha Tahar



Producer
Claire LeProust
Maroko & Hugo
Legrand-Nathan

Production Company **FABLABCHANNEL & 2HORLOGES**

France & Algeria

Contact Information

Laetitia Stoffel | laetitia@2horloges.com
Zoulikha Tahar | tahar.zoulikha@yahoo.fr

Synopsis

Oran. Six days before her younger sister's wedding, Zouzou, a 30-year-old single bio-maritime engineer, still hasn't found the courage to tell her family she's leaving the day after the wedding to follow the migration of sardines that have mysteriously disappeared. Between gossip about her single

status and therapy sessions with her "psy" hairdresser will she manage to leave?



TASTE OF ARRIVAL



Director and
Producer

Sana Al Mor

Production Company **Sana Al Mor & F•F Schule für Kunst und Design**

Switzerland

Contact Information

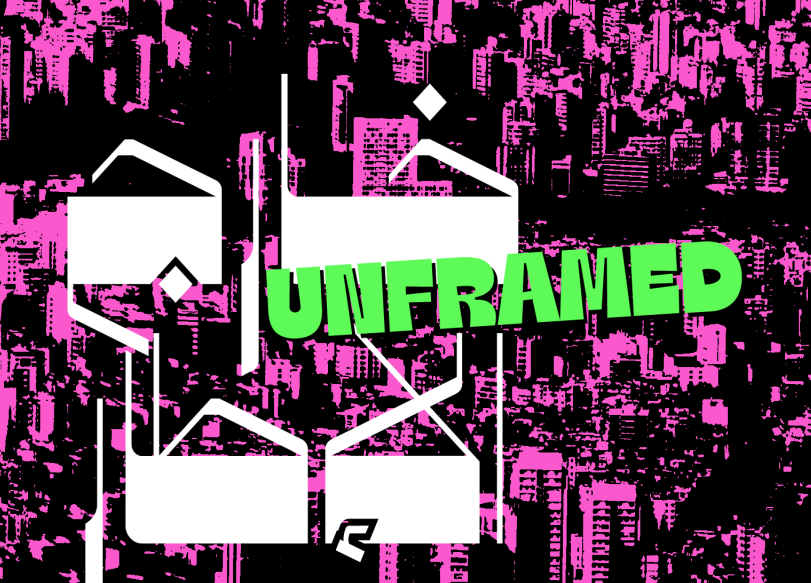
Sana Al Mor | sana.almor@protonmail.com

Synopsis

What is identity? What is dignity? What is a path? And what is a destination? These are the questions at the heart of the narrative.

Three interwoven stories complement one another like pieces of a puzzle—each shedding light on different dimensions of the others. Through their journeys, three characters

seek to experience the taste of arrival, each striving to build a better life while navigating the complexities of displacement, hope, and belonging.



UNFRAMED



Director
**Jean-Claude
Boulos**



Producer
Bachir Asmar

Production Company **Ziggy's**

Lebanon

Contact Information

Jean-Claude Boulos | jean.claude.a.boulos@gmail.com

Synopsis

Unframed is a documentary series that immerses viewers in the often overlooked arts scene of the Middle East. Each season enters the lives and creative processes of independent artists across various disciplines. Through a day-in-the-life approach, each episode adapts to the artist's point of view as they unfold their stories.

Season one of Unframed is set in Lebanon,

featuring six artists from diverse backgrounds practicing and contributing to the artistic tapestry of the country: writer and actress Tamara Saade, stylist and performer Bsharah Atallah, painter Carla Habib, collage artist Sarkis Joulfaian, photographer Yasmina Hilal, and musician Donna Khalife.

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AFID AWARDS



DEVELOPMENT
CATEGORY



POST-PRODUCTION
CATEGORY



MARKET AWARDS
CATEGORY

DEVELOPMENT CATEGORY



The Royal Film Commission - Jordan

\$7000 cash award for a Jordanian Awal Film project in development



The Royal Film Commission - Jordan

\$7000 cash award for an Arab project in development



Ghiath and Nadia Sukhtian Foundation

\$5000 cash award for a Jordanian Awal Film project in development



In-kind development support for a Jordanian Awal Film project in development worth \$3800



MASNA3:

\$2500 cash award and \$2500 in-kind consultation award for an Arab project in development



Slate Film Services

In-kind production services award for a Jordanian Awal Film project in development worth \$25,000



DOCUMENTARY ASSOCIATION OF EUROPE

In-kind consultation award and two free memberships for one year for a documentary project in development or post-production

POST-PRODUCTION CATEGORY



The Royal Film Commission - Jordan

\$7000 cash award for a project in post-production



IEFTA

€6000 cash award for a project in post-production



Creative Media Solutions

In-kind packaging and DCP services award for a documentary project in post-production worth \$7000



Unison Studio

In-kind sound design and mixing award for a project in post-production worth \$15,000



RUM Pictures

In-kind Color Grading and DCP award for a project in post-production worth \$10,000

MARKET AWARDS

CATEGORY



ART

\$10,000 cash award for a narrative project in development



FRENCH INSTITUTE:

In-kind award for a Jordanian project in development to travel to France to attend Noisy-le-sec 2025



RED SEA

\$5000 cash award for a project in development



RED SEA

\$5000 cash award for a project in post-production


ALEXANDRA VIETS:

In-kind consultation award for a project in development



CAIRO FILM FESTIVAL:

In-kind award for a project to participate in Cairo Film Connection 2025

 **Unison Studio**

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FROM RAW FOOTAGE TO OSCAR-WORTHY SOUNDTRACKS

Unison Studio is a leading audio post-production studio based in Malmö, Sweden. We are steadfastly committed to excellence and specialise in delivering top-notch sound solutions for film and media projects. We understand the vital role that sound plays in enhancing the storytelling experience. Our dedicated team combines artistic creativity with technical expertise to bring projects to life through immersive soundscapes.

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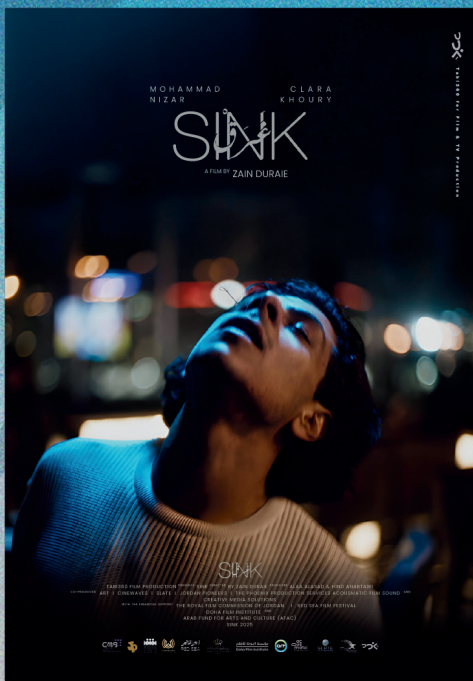


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WORKSHOPS

AI & FILMMAKING – EAVE ON DEMAND

HOW TO CHOOSE A ROLE, REFLECTIONS WITH
GEORGE KHABBAZ

SCRIPT MAJLIS

THE UNREAL EXPERIENCE – HYBRID
DOCUMENTARIES USING GAMING Engines

DOCSAFE ROUND TABLE



Workshop	AI & FILMMAKING EAVE ON DEMAND
Date(s)	3rd and 4th of July, 2025
Duration	3:00 PM – 6:00 PM

About the Workshop

Join seasoned Finnish producer Aleksi Hyvärinen for a journey into how AI is reshaping the indie filmmaking landscape. Presented by Nordic creative studio The Alchemist and tailored for professional filmmakers with no or basic AI experience, this workshop skips coding and tool mastery—instead, it's all about real-world insights, inspiring examples, and candid discussions around the creative and ethical challenges of AI.

Get a quick sneak peek at popular AI tools like Google Veo, Kling, and ChatGPT, and see how they're already being used by filmmakers. You'll leave with a grounded producer's perspective on what's next for your projects in this rapidly changing landscape.

ABOUT THE EXPERT



Aleksi Hyvärinen

Aleks is a Finnish film producer, writer, and co-founder of Don Films. With almost 20 years of experience in the film industry, his credits include the international horror film *THE TWIN* (2022), distributed globally and released in cinemas in 34 countries, as well as the Finnish box office hit *JINGLE BELLS* (2022) and the Scandinavian horror standout *LAKE BODOM* (2016). His recent co-productions include *THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE BARN* (2023), sold to Sony, and Netflix's Emmy- and BAFTA-nominated *HOLD YOUR BREATH: THE ICE DIVE* (2022). His latest project, *ELLA AND FRIENDS: OPERATION OTTER* (2025), is currently in post-production. Aleks is also a founding member of The Alchemist, a Nordic creative studio exploring how AI can enhance filmmaking.

Workshop **HOW TO CHOOSE A ROLE,
REFLECTIONS WITH GEORGE KHABBAZ**

Date(s) **5th of July, 2025**

Duration **3:00 PM – 6:00 PM**

About the Workshop

What makes a role worth performing?

How do you choose characters that not only challenge your abilities but also shape your long-term career?

Join the versatile artist George Khabbaz for a session dedicated to actors seeking deep reflection on their artistic journey.

Drawing on decades of experience in theatre, television, and film, George will share personal anecdotes, pivotal moments, and the values that guide his choice of roles.

ABOUT THE EXPERT



Georges Khabbaz

Georges Khabbaz is a multi-talented artist with over 25 years of experience as an actor, writer, theatre director, producer and university professor. He is also a poet and composer of numerous songs and music pieces. Khabbaz is passionate about addressing humanitarian issues through his creative works and contributing to the promotion of human rights principles. His impressive portfolio includes acclaimed movies such as "Ghadi," "Under the Bombs," "Silina," and "Perfect Strangers, ". Khabbaz won multiple Best Actor awards for starring in "Yunan", a film directed by Ameer Fakher Eldin. He also starred in popular TV series like "Abdo & Abdo," "Brando Al Sharq," and "Nar bil-Nar." In addition, he has written and directed more than 18 theatrical plays that bear his unique signature, with the latest being "Khyel Sahra", which he wrote and starred in alongside Adel Karam.

Workshop **SCRIPT MAJLIS**

Date(s) **6th and 7th of July, 2025**

Duration **3:00 PM – 6:00 PM**

About the Workshop

This Two-day intensive workshop will examine the process of consulting for Jordan based scriptwriters with existing projects in development. Leading with a particular emphasis on incorporating actors as a critical part of a project's development, the workshop will feature a case-study highlight to encourage an in-depth look at the rewriting and revision process---and to ask, what changes for the writer when work is read aloud?

Examining techniques to approach broad-based issues such as character veracity, scene building, and dialogue, the workshop will enable participants to experience their work

ABOUT THE EXPERT



Alexandra Viets

Alexandra Anastasia Viets is a writer/screenwriter and journalist whose work focuses on women and displacement. Her first feature-length screenplay, *Cotton Mary*, won a New York Foundation for the Arts award and was produced by Merchant Ivory. Her most recent screenplay, *Ask Me No Questions*, received the award for best screenplay at the Auckland International Film Festival in 2018. Awarded a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities in South Asia, she has taught screenwriting internationally with a focus in India, where she grew up. Her international work includes collaboration on the award-winning *White Sun*, a feature drama produced in Nepal. Currently, Viets teaches writing in the MA in Writing Program at Johns Hopkins University. She is the author of the forthcoming memoir, *After the War, Maryna A Memoir*.

Workshop **DOCSAFE ROUND TABLE**

Date(s) **6th of July, 2025**

Duration **10:00 AM – 1:00 PM**

About the Roundtable

The roundtable is part of the wider #DocSafe initiative, a global, community-driven effort advocating for safer, more ethical practices in the documentary industry and beyond. It fosters critical reflection and action around a broad range of challenges, including harassment, abuse of power, ethical breaches, and curatorial blind spots. Rather than acting as a watchdog, DocSafe provides a space for dialogue, self-assessment, and collective learning. At AFID, this roundtable will bring together filmmakers, producers, curators, and institutional representatives to share practices, identify needs, and propose actionable steps—particularly within the Arab world and the Global South. Your insights will directly contribute to the broader #DocSafe ecosystem, helping shape tools and frameworks rooted in our regional contexts."



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  The Rainbow Theater

Workshop **THE UNREAL EXPERIENCE – HYBRID DOCUMENTARIES USING GAMING Engines**

Date(s) **7th of July, 2025**

Duration **3:00 PM – 6:00 PM**

About the Workshop

AFID invites documentary filmmakers to apply for an immersive and cutting-edge workshop that explores the intersection of nonfiction storytelling and virtual production using Unreal Engine.

Led by renowned filmmaker Samir, this workshop unpacks his latest hybrid documentary "The Miraculous Transformation of the Working Class into Foreigners", offering in-depth case studies and technical insights into blending animation and documentary using game engine tools.

This hands-on session is aimed at documentary filmmakers, animators, and digital artists seeking to expand their creative toolkit with Unreal Engine and animated storytelling.

ABOUT THE EXPERT



Samir

Born in 1955 in Baghdad, Iraq, Samir migrated with his family to Switzerland in the 1960s. After studying at the School of Arts in Zurich and training as a typographer and cameraman, he became an activist in Zurich's Radical Youth Movement in the early 1980s. Since 1982, he has worked as a freelance author and director. Today, Samir is internationally recognized for his fiction, documentary, and experimental films — many of which have received major festival recognition and awards. His filmography includes over 40 feature-length and short films, including the award-winning *Forget Baghdad* (2002), *Iraqi Odyssey* (2014), and *Baghdad in My Shadow* (2019). Recent works include *Stranger in My Village* and *The Miraculous Transformation of the Working Class into Foreigners* (2023). Samir also co-manages *Dschoint Ventschr Filmproduktion*, a Zurich-based company supporting emerging Swiss talent. As a director and producer, he is also active in theater and visual arts.

His productions include *White Terror* (2005), *Fraulein* (2006), *Operation Libertad* (2012), and the upcoming *Al Basser*.

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