

3RD EDITION OF THE
RED SEA INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL

BOOK of PRO- JECTS

مهرجان البحر الأحمر السينمائي الدولي
RED SEA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
30 NOV ————— 09 DEC, 2023

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**YOUR
STORY
YOUR
FESTIVAL**

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SPONSORS

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Principal Sponsors



WELCOME TO THE RED SEA SOUK



The Red Sea International Film Festival welcomes you to the Red Sea Souk, a platform designed to discover new Arab and African productions as well as detect emerging and rising talents. From December 2–5, the Souk will run alongside the screenings and the program at Saudi Arabia’s first international film festival.

The Souk is a window into the Arab and African film industries that distributors, sales agents, festival programmers, and producers can look into for a network of talents. It is an opportunity to discover the new Saudi, Arab, and African film scenes, providing unbeatable access to the industry professionals making this scene a reality.

The organized events curated by the Souk will host a comprehensive program of meetings and discussions for industry attendees. These events are also an opportunity to forge networking links with talented professionals from the region.

Our industry program includes the third Red Sea Souk Selection of African and Arab Projects in development, production, and post-production. Additionally, film industry leaders and emerging industry players will share their insights on local and regional trends at panels and in conversation.

The Red Sea Souk Exhibitor Hall is the place to promote and sell films, host meetings, and start new collaborations to assist the growth of the local and regional film industry and its ecosystem.

Being part of the Red Sea Souk, you can scope out an array of forthcoming titles from emerging and established filmmakers.

See you at the Red Sea Souk!



Zain Zedan
Red Sea Souk Manager

NOTE FROM THE RED SEA SOUK MANAGER

Brimming with excitement, we welcome our industry guests and films to the third edition of the Red Sea International Film Festival and Red Sea Souk. We are inspired to develop a stronger program every year as we continue to build on the great success that the Red Sea Souk achieved in its first and second editions.

Seeing the films and projects from the second Red Sea Souk screened at various international festival selection programs all over the world fills us with pride to have contributed to the filmmakers' success stories. Fueled with this motivation and drive, we continue to work tirelessly to support more of those cinematic talents, lifting them up to inspire the world with their unique stories and creative visions.

Our faith in Saudi artists as well as those from the greater Arab and African regions blossoms with each new project we discover here at the Souk, and we look forward to building more bridges that can deliver those projects to global audiences. Our strategically designed industry platform promotes film development and distribution while highlighting Saudi Arabia's rich and fascinating cultural legacy and the broader Arab and African scenes.

None of this could have been possible without the unwavering efforts of our passionate and hardworking team members, and for that, we are grateful.

We look forward to giving you an exceptional Red Sea Souk experience as we work to expand our film market with one goal in mind: to honor the captivating art of cinematic storytelling at the core of the Red Sea International Film Festival under the theme "Your Story, Your Festival".

From all of us here at the Red Sea Souk, we wish you an inspiring, fun, and productive Souk experience.

RED SEA SOUK AWARDS

All selected projects will compete for jury-granted awards offered by the Red Sea Fund. The awards are:

cash prize

25,000 USD

Red Sea Souk Jury Special Mention Award
(Souk Project)

cash prize

35,000 USD

Red Sea Souk Development Award
(Souk Project)

cash prize

100,000 USD

Red Sea Souk Production Award
(Souk Project)

cash prize

200,000 USD

50,000 USD Lodge Production Award for Four Projects
(The Lodge projects)

cash prize

30,000 USD

Red Sea Souk Post-Production Award
(WIP Souk Project)

cash prize

10,000 USD

Red Sea Souk Post-Production Special Mention Award
(WIP Souk Project)

SOUK AWARD PARTNERS



Arab Cinema Center (ACC)

An in-kind award will be granted by the Red Sea Jury for one Saudi and one Arab project in the development or production phase. It comprises participation – with all expenses paid – in the 2024 Rotterdam Lab, part of the Rotterdam International Film Festival.



Arab Radio and Television Network (ART)

Two cash awards will be granted by AMC/ART, with the acquisition of Arab World distribution rights, consisting of the following:

– 50,000 USD for one Saudi project in development or production.

– 50,000 USD for one Arab project in development or production.



Cinewaves Films

One cash award will be granted by CineWaves, conditioning the exclusive Middle East and North Africa distribution rights of the film, consisting of the following:

– 50,000 USD as a minimum guarantee to be recouped from the first income after the distribution of the film upon the detailed contract, to projects in development or production or post-production.



MAD Solutions

One cash award will be granted by Mad Solutions, with the acquisition of Arab World distribution rights, consisting of the following:

– 50,000 USD to either an in-development project, in-production project or an in-post-production project.



Ithra

One cash award will be granted by Ithra, consisting of the following:

– 50,000 USD for one Saudi project in production or post-production.



MBC Academy/Shahid

Three cash awards will be granted by MBC Academy/Shahid, with the acquisition of Arab World distribution rights, consisting of the following:

– 75,000 USD for a Saudi project in development.

– 75,000 USD for a Saudi project in development or production or post-production.

– 50,000 USD for an Arab project in development or in post-production phase.



Oticons

Two in-kind awards to be granted by Oticons, consisting of the following:

– Original Music Score services rendered by a Composer worth 10,000 USD for a Work-In-Progress film.

– Music Consulting services worth 5,000 USD for a Work-in-Progress film.



Shift Studios

Three in-kind awards will be granted by the Red Sea Souk Jury to a film in post-production, consisting of the following:

– Two promotion packages worth 12,000 USD each, to be awarded to two different Work-in-Progress film.

– Full DCP package worth 8,000 USD to one Work-In-Progress film.



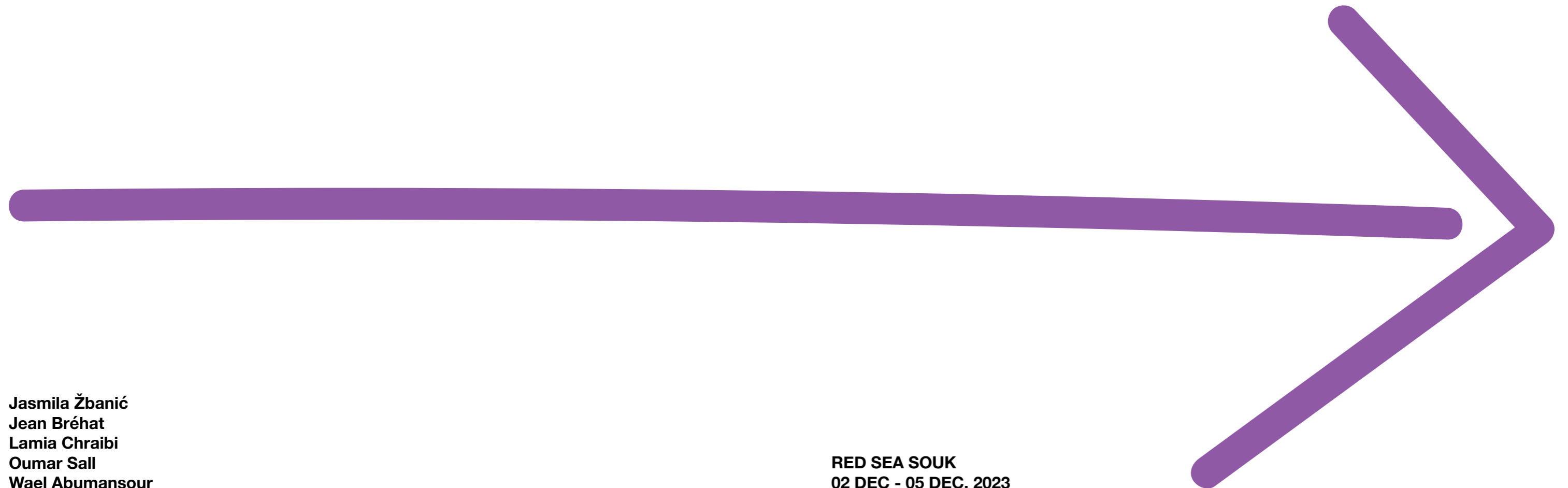
TITRAFILM

One in-kind awards to be granted by the Red Sea Souk Jury consisting of the following:

– Image and sound editing workstations, colour grading and sound mix studios, multilingual localization, and deliveries worth 15,000 USD for a Work-in-Progress film.

RED SEA SOUK JURIES

PROJECT
MARKET JURY



Jasmila Žbanić
Jean Bréhat
Lamia Chraibi
Oumar Sall
Wael Abumansour

RED SEA SOUK
02 DEC - 05 DEC, 2023

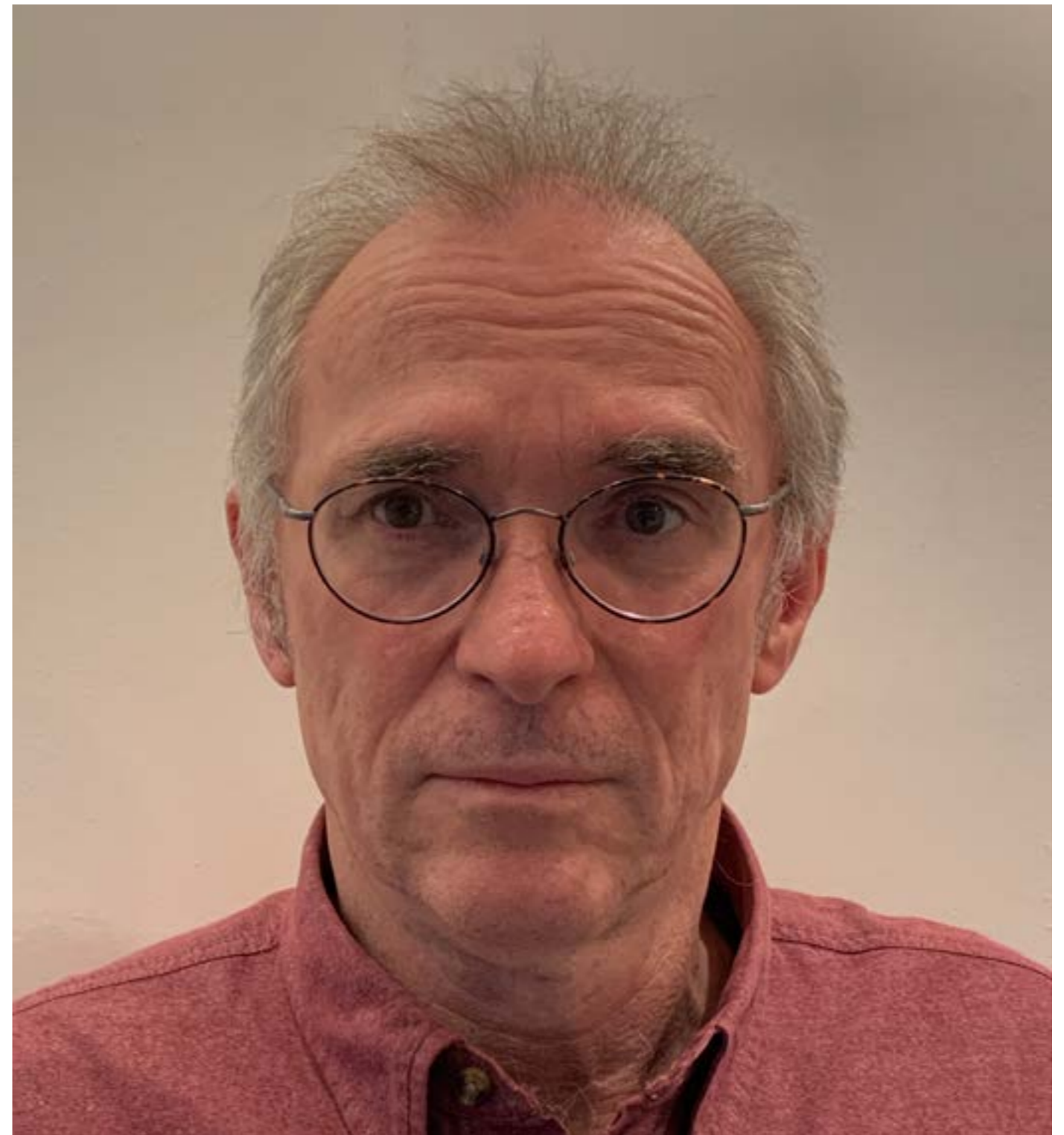
Jasmila Žbanić

Jasmila Žbanić is an Oscar and BAFTA-nominated director. In 1997, together with her friends, she founded the Artist's Association "Deblokada" through which she produced, wrote and directed her feature film "Grbavica", awarded with a Golden Bear in Berlinale 2006, and Best Film at the American Film Institute (AFI)... "Quo Vidas, Aida?" which premiered at Venice Film Festival, and besides multiple other awards, this movie received the Independent Spirit Award for Best International Film, European Film Academy Award for Best film, director and main actress, as well as nominations for USA Academy Awards (Oscar) in the category of Best International Feature Film, and two BAFTA Awards. She directed one episode of the acclaimed HBO TV show "The Last of Us". Venice Film Festival presented her TV show "I Know Your Soul" in 2023.



Jean Bréhat

Jean Bréhat was born in Paris. In 1980, he became a mathematics teacher and in 1985, a location manager and a line producer. In 1991, he produced his first film "Cheb" with his partner Rachid Bouchareb who directed the film. Since then, he has produced 45 films with 11 official entries for the Oscars (Best Foreign Language Film); four nominations and 12 awards in Cannes, including three Palmes d'Or awards for Best Actor and Best Actress; two Grand Prix, one Silver Bear in Berlin, and many other awards from major festivals. He has produced films by his partner, Rachid Bouchared, and other directors such as Bruno Dumont, Roschdy Zem, Youssef Chahine, Ziad Doueri, Karim Dridi, among others. He teaches regularly at La Fémis, is a member of many commissions for the CNC, a member of the César Academy Awards, and of the Academy of Motion Picture and Science.



Lamia Chraibi

Lamia Chraibi is the founder and producer of Moon a Deal Films in Paris and La Prod in Casablanca. Having studied Audiovisual Communication Management in France, Lamia gained practical experience in various Parisian productions before establishing her own structures. Lamia works for a committed, free, and independent cinema. She develops fiction in its broadest sense, combining imagination and rigor without compromise or self-censorship. Lamia accompanies directors in their creative processes, including Hicham Lasri, Narjiss Nejjar, Oliver Laxe's "Mimosas" (Grand Prix, Cannes Film Festival's Critics' Week), Bálint Kenyeres' "Tegnap" (Locarno Film Festival), Talal Selhami's "Achoura," winner of the Best Film Award at Hardline Festival and a Special Mention from the Jury at Sitges Fantastic Film Festival and Ismael Ferroukhi's film Mica (Festival du Film Francophone d'Angoulême 2020). She produced various documentaries such as "Ziyara" by Simone Bitton (Grand Prix, Filmmaker Milan) and "School of Hope" by Mohamed El Aboudi (Special Jury Prize at Hot Docs, and a special award at Tampere). Both were widely acclaimed by critics. Lamia also produced various feature film projects and television programs.



Oumar Sall

Passionate about cinema, Oumar Sall studied at the Institut National de l'Audiovisuel (INA) in France. He is also a WIPO expert, a finance expert, and an economist. In 2019 in Essaouira, under the High Patronage of the King of Morocco Mohammed VI, he was one of the 250 emblematic actors identified as acting to resolve the major issues of our time. In 2021, he was consulted by UNESCO (The Film Industry in Africa: Trends, Challenges and Opportunities for Growth). He also participated as moderator at the international webinar "Towards a Sustainable Cultural and Creative Industry in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries" (June 2021).

Selected productions include: "Tey" by Alain Gomis (first Golden Stallion of Senegal at FESPACO 2013); "Félicité" by Alain Gomis (Jury Prize at La Berlinale 2017, Second Golden Stallion at FESPACO 2017, shortlisted for the Oscars 2018); "Atlantique" by Mati Diop (Jury Prize at Cannes in 2019, shortlisted for the Oscars 2020). Several of his short films have also been awarded at major festivals in France, Germany, Italy, South Korea, Burkina Faso, Canada, and the United States.

Oumar aspires to see the emergence of a big film industry in Senegal. In 2014, he created 'Up Courts-Métrages', a training and incubation program that mentors producers and writers/directors, and helps shape the cinema industry in Africa, with an international reference. The 'Up Courts-Métrages' school has given birth to numerous talents and successful short films all around the world.





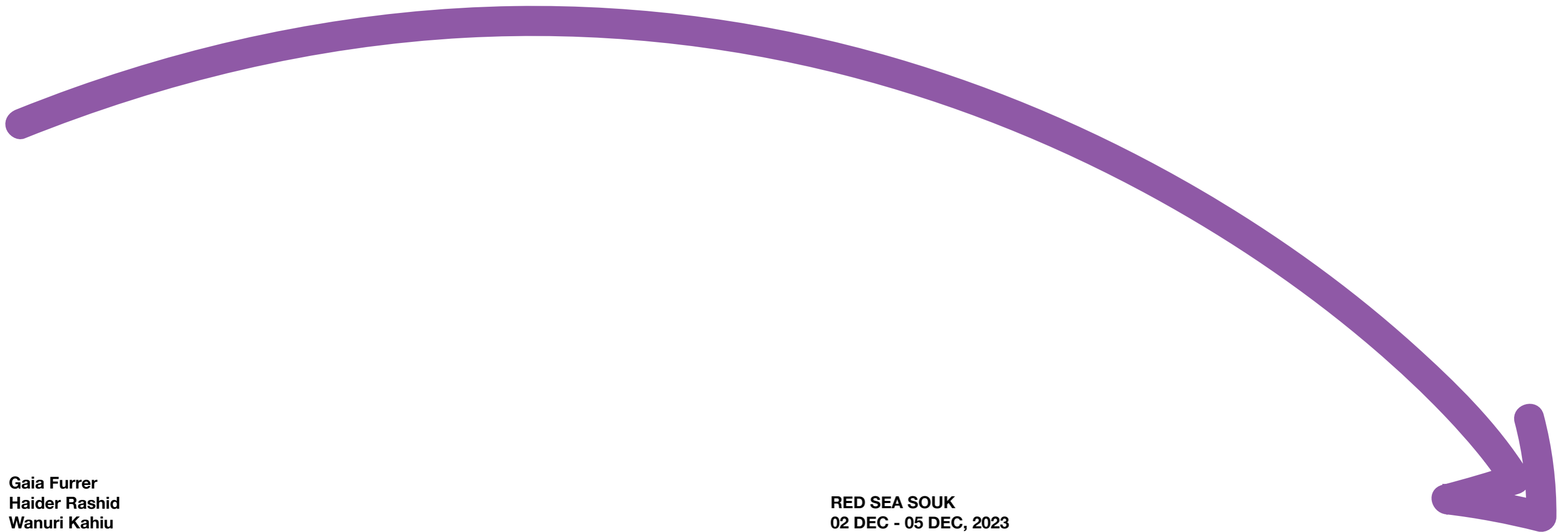
Wael Abumansour

Wael Fouad Abumansour is the head of Telfaz 11 studios and a writer, director and producer from Saudi Arabia. He is currently working on his second feature drama “Saify” (2024), which is undergoing post-production. Wael ventured into filmmaking in 2012, and his debut feature film “Carnival City” was selected in the first edition of Red Sea International Film Festival (2021). He also wrote, directed and produced numerous projects, including the documentaries “Mozmarji” (2017) and “The Qanadil of Uncle Salem” (2013). Before venturing into filmmaking, Wael was a journalist with a remarkable career spanning 15 years in distinguished news organizations like “Al-Watan” newspaper, “Asharq Al-Awsat” newspaper, and AFP.



RED SEA SOUK JURIES

WORK-IN-
PROGRESS
JURY



Gaia Furrer

She was born in Italy in 1975 and graduated with a degree in Cinema History at the University La Sapienza in Rome. She collaborated with Film Italia, the public agency in charge of promoting Italian cinema abroad, and curating national and international projects. She produced a few shorts and a feature film. She programmed and was a consultant for a few film festivals. Since 2003, she has worked as Head of Programming at the Noir in Festival, the Italian film festival focused on the noir genre. After working at Giornate degli Autori (GDA)—the independent sidebar of the Venice Film Festival—as a programmer and head of programming since the very first edition, she was appointed as the new artistic director of GDA in 2020.





Haider Rashid

Haider Rashid is a writer, director, and producer born in 1985, of mixed Iraqi and Italian origins. He directed the feature narratives “Tangled Up in Blue” and “It’s About to Rain”; the feature documentaries “Silence: All Roads Lead to Music” and “Street Opera”; the short film “The Deep”; and the VR documentary “No Borders”. His films have won awards at Venice International Film Festival, Dubai International Film Festival, the Italian Golden Globes, and the Nastro d’Argento (Silver Ribbons), Italy’s oldest film awards. His latest feature “Europa” was selected at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival, in the Quinzaine des Réalisateurs—now Quinzaine des Cinéastes—(Directors’ Fortnight) section, where it won the Independent Critics’ Prize ‘Beatrice Sartori Award’. Among several other accolades, the film also won Best Director and Best Actor at the inaugural edition of the Red Sea International Film Festival, awarded by a jury presided by Academy Award winner Giuseppe Tornatore, and was selected as Iraq’s Official Entry for the 94th Oscars.





Wanuri Kahiu

Wanuri Kahiu is a filmmaker, speaker, and science fiction writer. Kahiu's award-winning film "Rafiki" was the first Kenyan film to be invited to the Cannes Film Festival, and has since won multiple awards across the world. Kahiu is a cultural leader for the World Economic Forum, an advocate for Freedom of Expression, and an Afrobubblegum activist, championing the need for the creation and curation of fun, fierce, and frivolous African art. Kahiu is a director for "Washington Black" for Hulu/20th Century Fox, which completed principal photography in 2022—an adaptation of the book by Esi Edugyan. She directed the Netflix film "Look Both Ways" starring Lili Reinhart, Luke Wilson and Nia Long, released in August 2022, and is set to direct "Once On This Island" for Disney. Kahiu was named in Time's "100 Next" in 2019.



THE RED SEA LABS



Ryan Ashore
Head of the Red Sea Labs

NOTE FROM THE HEAD OF THE RED SEA LABS

In times of transformation and change, we remain steadfast in our mission to nurture the industry and build a vibrant creative community. We kept our promise by widening our reach. The Labs programs now span across various disciplines, encompassing series, music, shorts, and on-set training, among others.

Gathering here for the new edition of the Red Sea International Film Festival, we celebrate the remarkable success of our artists and storytellers. Through their unwavering passion, dedication, and collaborative spirit, they've illuminated our world with renewed meaning and profound beauty.

As we approach the conclusion of the fourth edition of the Lodge, we reflect on the incredible ten-month journey. From the star-studded deserts of AIUla to the enchanting streets of Torino, inspiration has enveloped us, and profound friendships have been forged.

To all the Lodge participants, I say this: You stand just one step away from realizing your dreams, and remember, you're never alone on this path.

A heartfelt thank you to each and every individual who has played an integral role in this incredible journey.

THE LODGE



The Red Sea Labs presents the Lodge residency program in collaboration with TorinoFilmLab. The Lodge has chosen 12 Saudi, Arab and African feature film projects to participate in an intensive 10-month program. Each project comprises of a writer, a director and a producer. The Lodge offered these selected individuals the invaluable opportunity to collaborate with top-notch instructors who guided them in developing their films and realize their creative visions. This program not only focuses on script development but also includes a producer coaching program that covers various aspects of professional growth, production, financing, sales, and marketing. Participants also had the chance to collaborate with experienced filmmakers and industry professionals from around the world in areas such as directing, cinematography, editing, sound, post-production, and sales. The Lodge this year took place in Alula, Dammam, Torino, and is concluding in Jeddah.

After the development phase and meetings with industry professionals, four projects will be awarded the Red Sea Lodge Production award, which includes a grant of 50,000 USD.

The Red Sea Labs provides a variety of programs aimed at nurturing and enhancing the skills of individuals who have distinct viewpoints in the realms of film and episodic storytelling. These programs encompass the entire creative journey, offering support and opportunities for talent development.

AN ENDLESS NIGHT
BLACK SNAKE
BY HASNAA'S SIDE
FANTASTIC TALE
IN THE BEGINNING, IT IS THE END
MECCA, BERLIN
MY FATHER KILLED BOURGUIBA
THE NIGHT WHISPERER
TEMPORARY LIVES
THE GIRL AND THE MISSING BED
THE MIDDLE ONE
THE SUN SEES EVERYTHING

THE LODGE PROJECTS

AN ENDLESS NIGHT

Genre(s): Neo-Noir, Drama

Country(ies): Egypt

Language(s): Colloquial Egyptian (Arabic)

Logline:

In the nights of Cairo, a 40-year-old devastated journalist, who lives in the shadow of his past disrupted relationship with his successful father, descends into an investigative search to unravel the truth behind a myth of an immortal healer.

Project Synopsis:

Yehia Kassem, a former investigative journalist, finds himself in a desolate Cairo as his own memory illness takes a toll on him. After his father's death, Yehia finds a memoir written by his father, which recounts an encounter with Zaabalawi, an immortal figure known for his extraordinary healing abilities.

Intrigued by this figure, Yehia sets out to find Zaabalawi, hoping for a transformative revelation that will surpass his previous successes as an investigative journalist.

In the memoir, Yehia comes across a passage where his father expresses regret for missing an opportunity to meet Zaabalawi due to a past incident. Upon further investigation, he is faced with two contradictory narratives about the myth of Zaabalawi. While both narratives can be reconciled with the authenticity of his father's encounter, Yehia is faced with the challenge of determining the truth.

Yehia's desire to find Zaabalawi grows stronger as he begins to experience the same illness symptoms his father described. He embarks on a nocturnal voyage of self-discovery to uncover the truth about the memoir and find a cure for his inherited illness.



Mohamed Kassaby

Writer and Director

Mohamed Kassaby is an Egyptian film director, screenwriter and producer. His filmography includes "That's What Happened" (2019), "Inhabitants of the Nile" (2020), and "Epilogue" (2021). He recently wrapped up his fifth short film project as a director/producer, "Flying Salama", the recipient of the production grant award from the 2nd edition of the Sunbird Stories Program. He is currently developing his first feature film "An Endless Night". The project kicked off in Beirut Cinema Platform and was selected in the Jumpstart Program by Durban FilmMart in partnership with Produire au Sud, Cinephilia's Advanced Screenwriting Lab, the Red Sea Lodge by Red Sea Foundation in partnership with Torino Film Lab.



Mohamed Kateb

Producer

Mohamed Kateb is a filmmaker and producer from Alexandria, Egypt, currently based in Hamburg, Germany. Influenced by human connections, city lights, and urban legends, he tells tales of everyday characters that are portrayals of the Egyptian society of today. He's currently developing his debut fiction feature "An Endless Night" as a producer which was officially selected in Red Sea Lodge, Beirut Cinema Platform organized by Beirut DC, and Jumpstart- program by Durban FilmMart 2022. His latest short film "Flying Salama", where he was the writer and producer, is the winner of the 2nd edition Sunbird Stories Production Grant. His short "Shawky" was selected to participate in Scriptwriting Klink by the Red Sea International Film Festival and Goethe-Institut, in cooperation with the Film Academy Baden-Württemberg. He co-produced the short "Objects Are Closer Than They Appear", which had its World Premiere at the 45th Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival.

Director's Intention:

An Endless Night is a neo-noir film set in present-day Cairo about Yehia Kassem, a young man struggling with the loss of his loved ones and his cultural heritage, seeks an escape from the pain of his memories by exploring the city's dark and mysterious streets at night. Yehia's journey is a journey of self-discovery, as he learns to confront his past and find his place in the world. The film creates a dark and ghostly ambiance that captures the haunting essence of Cairo's night. The city is personified as a character, with its cultural tales and significant history playing a pivotal part in the storyline.

Through this project, I aim to explore the theme of loss in various forms, including loved ones, cultural heritage, and personal identity. I believe that An Endless Night is a story about the human experience of loss and the power to overcome it.

Production Company:

Varphi Studio

31 Ahmed Abdelaziz, Kafr Abdo, Alexandria

+201098310131

info@varphistudio.com

Producer: Mohamed Kateb

Estimated Budget: \$843,893.26

Financing Acquired: \$30,000

Financers: Varphi Studio

BLACK SNAKE

Genre(s): Drama
Country(ies): Zimbabwe
Language(s): Shona

Logline:

In a rural village, a family eager to start a new life is forced to face their true cultural identity, when the appearance of a mysterious tree coincides with their arrival in the village.

Project Synopsis:

Janet, her mother Gogo, her husband Petros, and their son Tino, move into their new home in a remote rural village in the mountainous eastern highlands of Zimbabwe. A mystery looms over the true identity of this family, who are eager to start a new life here. When a mysterious tree suddenly appears at the local church, the school, and the family's home, all eyes now fall on the family, who begin to receive unwarranted attention from the local police, the chief, and the village preacher. While Tino and Gogo try to unravel the mystery of the tree, Janet and Petros try to contain the situation. When the tree finally appears in their living room, the family's identity is finally revealed; Gogo is a renowned traditional healer and Janet is a rainmaker, who can summon rain when she sings. Janet's decision to never sing again brought on a drought in her previous village and the family was subsequently accused of witchcraft and banished. When the family realizes that the tree has been following Tino all along, they are forced to either forsake who they were and remain in the village, or embrace who they truly are.



Naishe Nyamubaya
Writer and Director

Naishe Nyamubaya is a Zimbabwean-Egyptian filmmaker. His short films have screened at numerous festivals including the BFI, Chicago, Pan African, and Jozi-Film Festivals, and have been awarded at the South African Film And Television Awards (SAFTAS), the European Film Festival, and ZIFF in Zimbabwe. The Valedictorian of his year, he completed his postgraduate studies in Motion Picture in 2021 and worked as a screenwriter for ETV in South Africa. "Chimbo Chebere" (The Hyena's Song), his first feature film project, slated to shoot in 2024, won the Jury Prize for Development at the Red Sea Souk in 2021 and was selected for Cannes Cinefondation's L'atelier and the TIFF Filmmaker Lab in 2022. In addition to "Black Snake", he is developing "Graft" with producer Sue-Ellen Chitunya, which was selected at the Durban FilmMart 2023 and won the ACP, Cinemart, and NFVF's best fiction awards.



Sue-Ellen Chitunya
Producer

Sue-Ellen Chitunya is a Zimbabwean-American filmmaker. A 2023 Presidential Leadership Scholar, she is a Georgia State University (BA'10) 40 under 40 honoree, and a graduate of the UCLA professional producing program. She is a member of AMPAS/OSCARS. A Roger and Chaz Ebert Fellow, Chitunya has participated in various artist development programs including Film Independent Amplifier, Realness DET, WIF Emerging Producer Program, Film Independent Producing Lab, Industry Academy at Lincoln Center NY, and Rotterdam Lab. Her projects have been selected for Durban FilmMart, SFFILM, and The Gotham. Chitunya has produced several shorts that have screened at festivals around the world including Tribeca, Rotterdam, BFI London, and Outfest. Her varied work experience includes Post Production Coordinator on Marvel Studios' "Avengers: Endgame" (2019) and "Black Panther" (2018). She recently produced the documentary "For Tomorrow" (2022) available on Amazon Prime, and the interactive romcom "Mr. Right" (2022) available on mobile app stores worldwide.

Director's Intention:

This is a film about identity, home, and belonging. Like the family in the film, practitioners of traditional African beliefs have been displaced and disenfranchised, torn between their ancient roots and Zimbabwe's post-colonial Christian reality they find themselves in. Our identity is inextricably tied to our place of origin, and the film explores what happens when that place is gone, invaded, or changed. The mysterious tree in the film acts as a catalyst that unearths the family's true identity, placing the family at odds with their religious community. Utilizing magical realism, we tread the thin line between the deeply human story we have and the deeper spiritual existence we experience here in my country. Little is known about Zimbabwe by the global audience, and this story will offer a new perspective, by being unapologetically bold in its voice, rich in its Zimbabwean aesthetic, and true to its source.

Production Company:
263 Reels Productions
Plot M Barrington Rd, Waterfalls, Harare,
Zimbabwe
+1 678 571 0196
lydiasue.ellen@gmail.com
Producer: Sue-Ellen Chitunya

Estimated Budget: \$743,553
Financing Acquired: None
Financers: N/A

BY HASNAA'S SIDE

Genre(s): Drama, Social issue

Country(ies): Saudi Arabia

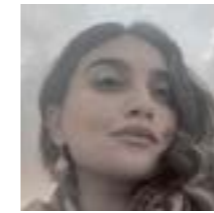
Language(s): Arabic

Logline:

Hasnaa, an eleven-year-old girl, escapes her wedding night for the sake of her life. She jumps into Saddah's truck, a farmer who supplies vegetables to the village. The transformation journey of both of them begins.

Project Synopsis:

Hasnaa, an eleven-year-old girl, escapes her wedding night after discovering she is the replacement bride for her dead cousin, Yossr. When the groom threatens her uncle Mussa with a harsh deal to protect his reputation and keep his legacy, Mussa must give Hasnaa away to avoid the consequences and the destruction of the family. But when Hasnaa sees her cousin's dead body, she runs away. Saddah, the farmer who supplies vegetables for the wedding, arrives to collect her fees from Uncle Mussa. She continues her route driving to the city to sell her crops, but during the ride, she discovers Hasnaa hiding in the trunk wearing a wedding dress. Hasnaa begs her to take her far away from her family. Saddah agrees and they rest at night. When Hasnaa catches Saddah talking to her mother, Hasnaa is sure that Saddah has betrayed her and once more she runs away. Saddah panics and looks everywhere to find her. She finds her hiding and crying. She tries to clarify the misunderstanding and explains that her mother is trying to protect her from her Uncle and to prevent her marriage.



Amaal Youssif

Writer and Director

Amaal Youssif was born on November 27, 1996 in Jeddah, KSA. She is an Egyptian writer and director, raised in Saudi Arabia. She studied filmmaking at Effat University and graduated in 2017 with a bachelor's degree in Screenwriting. After working as an Art Director for three years, on both films and TV series, she switched to Assistant Director and worked on many projects since 2018, handled over 150 TV commercials, and worked with world-renowned brands such as MAC Cosmetics, Adidas, Riyadh Season and Clorox. "Voice Note" (2017) was her first short film as a writer and was nominated as Best Script at the Sharjah International Film Festival.



Ghaidaa Abuazzah

Producer

Ghaidaa Abuazzah was born on April 5, 1995, in Medina, KSA. She studied Media at Taibah University and graduated in 2018 with a bachelor's degree in Journalism. She worked as an Assistant Director and Line Producer on films such as "The Matchmaker", "Old School", "Saifi", and over 100 commercials.

Director's Intention:

By Hasnaa's Side is a social issue drama film that discusses underage marriage since over 75% of suicide attempts or deaths take place during marital activities. The story is set in a village in Saudi, where a 14-year-old girl dies during a marital activity with her groom, which forces her cousin Hasnaa to become the replacement bride. The film highlights the greed, authority, power of choice, survival of the abused, and the consequences of underage marriage. While Hasnaa is transforming from a child to a woman, she's about to get married, lose her innocence, and the opportunity to live a normal childhood. The central conflict revolves around Hasnaa's survival journey when she jumps into a vegetable truck, meets Saddah, and revives Saddah's hope. The film showcases overcoming victimization via the solidarity of womanhood. Moreover, it aims to inspire the affected. It is a bold plot that leaves an emotional impact, as it encourages the audience to confront and break the silence around the unspoken.

Production Company:
Wildflower Films
 Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
 +966597706003
 gabuazzah@gmail.com
 Producer: Ghaidaa Abuazzah

Estimated Budget: \$1,400,000
Financing Acquired: None
Fiancers: RedSealFF, Ithraa, CDF, AFAC,
Doha Film Institute, MAFF

FANTASTIC TALE

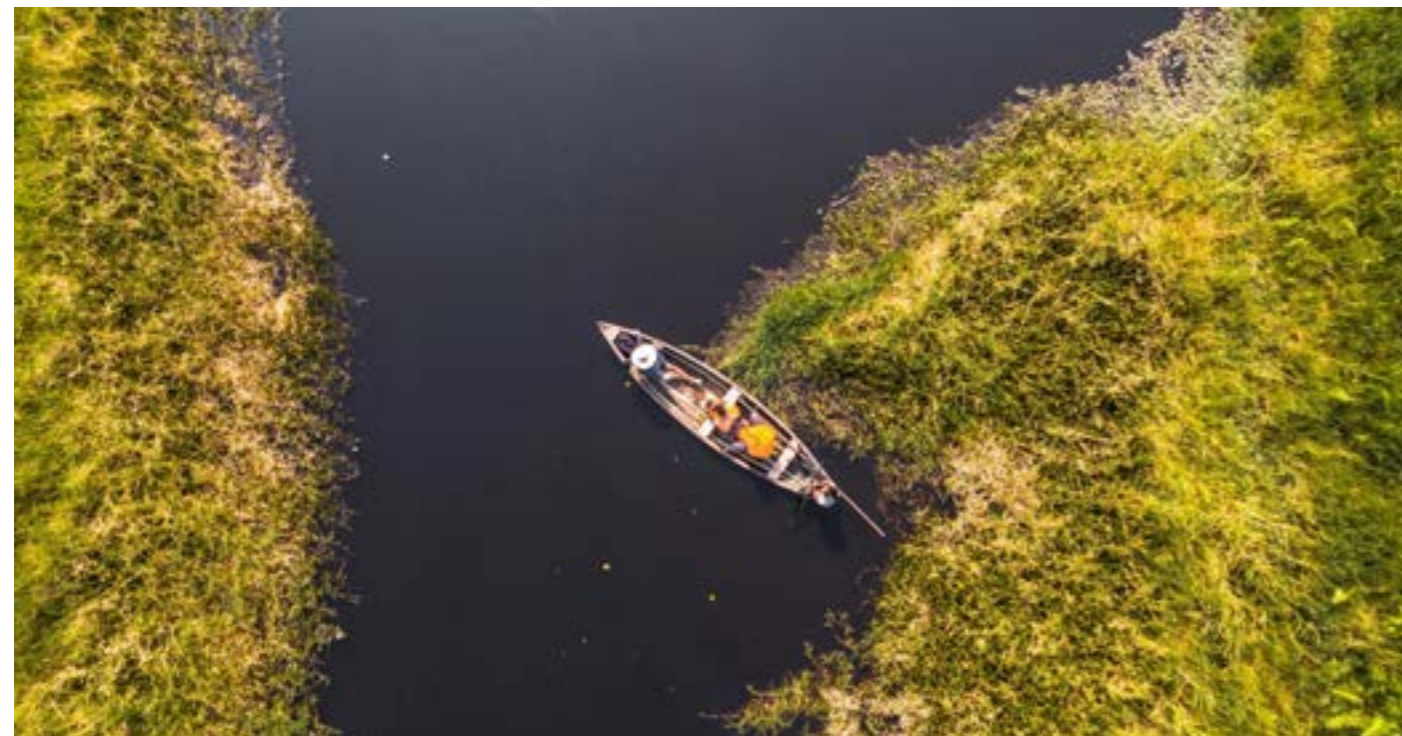
Genre(s): Adventure, Fantasy, Drama
 Country(ies): Nigeria
 Language(s): Yoruba, Pidgin, English

Logline:

Sweetie, an eccentric child, repairs an old boat and sails down a perilous Lagoon determined to catch a mystical pink fish that can make him wealthy enough to bring his sister home.

Project Synopsis:

Twelve-year-old Sweetie is overcome with sorrow when his sister departs their home for her husband's village. He learns that she is marrying a man from the village who was the last to catch a magical Pink Fish. Sweetie blames the Pink fish for the separation. He plans to sail the Lagoon to find the pink fish and use whatever fortune that comes with it to convince his sister to return home. With the help of Olamide, his older brother, and Maduka, his best friend, they repair an old boat. He also befriends Tochi, the mechanic's daughter who steals an engine for the trip. On the day of the departure, his brothers, Maduka and Tochi insist on joining the adventure. The brothers come to blows when Sweetie accuses Olamide of betrayal. The fight leads to doubts and they even consider turning back. When their boat crashes, they nearly die, but while they float and ponder on how to return home, the Pink fish shows up. It is magnificent. Rescued by their parents, Sweetie proceeds to his sister's new village on foot. He finds his sister, says a proper goodbye and finally accepts their different fates.



Vincho Nchogu
 Writer and Director

Vincho Nchogu is a multi-medium storyteller and an Indigenous Knowledge Systems digital archivist. She gained recognition in 2017 as the producer of "Gabriel and the Mountain," a Brazilian biopic that premiered at the la Semaine de la Critique du Festival de Cannes, winning two awards. Prior to this, Ms. Nchogu produced the East and Central African segment of the 'Future Express series' (NCVR), directed by Rob Hoff. She has produced a number of International documentaries including the short Doc directed by Uzo Aduba (Orange is the New Black) for the Love Vote, USA. She is also the Director of "African Knowledge Systems", a short doc series currently streaming on Youtube. In 2021, her investigative podcast 'Case Number Zero', became Kenya's number one crime podcast. Currently, Ms. Nchogu is directing and producing 'KEDONG' (in advanced development), a poaching thriller set in Kenya, Nigeria, and the USA. Ms. Nchogu is a Film Independent Producing fellow.



Josh Olaoluwa
 Producer

Josh Olaoluwa is an award-winning Producer who is keen on telling authentic African stories. His most recent works have been featured on Netflix, MTV Base, Smithsonian Institute, and Amazon Prime Video. He most recently worked at Ebonylife Studios, where he produced the romantic thriller 'A Sunday Affair' and 'Oloture 2', a Netflix limited series. Josh also worked as producer and showrunner of 'Grind', a limited series that debuted at the top spot on Amazon Prime's most-streamed shows in Nigeria. In 2022, his short film 'Naked Woman', was officially selected by the Smithsonian Museum of African Arts D.C. to commemorate Nigeria's 62nd independence. Josh is a 2023 recipient of the New York Foundation for the Arts prize in the Producing category for 'Love & Seclusion', becoming the only African film in the fiction feature category. When Josh is not making films, he teaches children between 8-12 how to use the camera.

Director's Intention:

A Fantastic Tale is a culmination of my childhood evenings where I listened to my mother compete with my grandmothers to tell the most compelling folklore. The folklore form finds its way into this coming-of-age story about 12-year-old Sweetie on a quest to heal his broken heart by seeking out a mystical pink fish whose existence is technically a myth. This is a fantasy film grounded in reality. Stylistically, the film's mood will oscillate between the safety of being on land and the apprehension of being on unknown waters. Lighting and framing will reflect the mood. Sound will be simple and naturalistic on land. In the water, sounds will enhance tension and anxiety. The essence of A Fantastic Tale is to reaffirm dreams. Dreams lead to invention, innovation, and connection with one another. I intend for the audience to walk away dreaming.

Production Company:
 Conceptified Media
 African Film Company
 Lekki Cubes Apartment, Lagos
 +2348060686200
 conceptifiedmedia@gmail.com
 Producer: Josh Olaoluwa

Estimated Budget: \$1,068,126.02
Financing Acquired: None
Financers: N/A

IN THE BEGINNING, IT IS THE END

Genre(s): Romantic Comedy

Country(ies): Saudi Arabia

Language(s): Arabic

Logline:

Salma, a 65-year-old, loses her father whom she dedicated her life to taking care of. Now, she is chased by the hardest form of love to resist, romantic love, and she must face her fears.

Project Synopsis:

Salma, is a 65-year-old woman whose father dies, leaving her to spend her days cooking alone with no one to enjoy her food. Salma comes home after a hospital visit to find her niece Zaina (28) hanging out with her secret boyfriend. Salma sneaks in and watches them as they caress each other, wishing to be them. During a walk in the park, Salma hurts her leg, and there, for the first time, she meets Adnan (71), who rushes to help her, despite her refusal. Charmed by her stubbornness and sharp tongue, he starts knocking on her door every day, bringing her desserts to win over her heart. Salma finally agrees to have dinner with Adnan and their love story begins. When Adnan's family catches them hanging out on their family farm, Salma is offended by his nephew's remarks and she decides to cut Adnan off. While Zaina is getting married, Salma listens to the song the newlyweds are dancing to and realizes that she is still in love with Adnan. Encouraged to admit her love to him, she runs back to his house and this time, she is the one who knocks on his door.



Ghadeer Binabbas

Writer and Director

An epidemiology graduate who pursued the dream by working on several creative projects, such as translating the feature Junoon (2021), and translating the script of the feature Dandanah (2021) which was nominated for the second round of Sundance Film Festival screenplay writing workshop. She also wrote and directed the short film Brush My Hair (2023), and worked as a co-writer and co-lyricist on the short film Urjeeha (2022). Currently, she is working as a writer on a series led by one of the top US streaming companies, as well as being part of the Red Sea Lodge development lab for the feature film In The Beginning, It is the End.



Ahmed Alerwi

Producer

Alerwi is a Saudi film producer with 10+ years in the industry. He earned his MFA from the American Film Institute (AFI), where his thesis film won the prestigious ASC Student Heritage Award. His experience includes six years at Telfaz11 as Head of Marketing and Sales, and currently at Thmanyah as Executive Producer. Ahmad also holds a B.Sc. degree in Business Administration with a major in Marketing.

Director's Intention:

Growing older is a definite destiny, and we must have the right to love and to continue to live as we become elderly through the representation of basic human needs. It is one of the most beautiful sights to see elderly people still loving and enjoying their small joyful moments. Making an elderly love story is making my own story for the future. With the development in Saudi Arabia, to showcase the fear of love and not having control that used to prohibit people from immersing themselves in life in the old Saudi and how it has changed to be more open and endearing in the new Saudi. Hanan and her niece Zaina are two faces of the same coin, and they will be the true representation of the changes in our country.

Production Company:
Producer Est.
 Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
 +966565309499
 ahmad.alerwi@gmail.com
Producer: Ahmad Alerwi

Estimated Budget: \$1,820,000
Financing Acquired: None
Financers: N/A

MECCA, BERLIN

Genre(s): Drama

Country(ies): Saudi Arabia, UAE, Germany

Language(s): Arabic, English, German

Logline:

Despite their troubled relationship, Yahya is obliged to care for his father during a medical treatment trip from Mecca to Berlin. He hires Rihab, a Syrian refugee nurse, to help him. While confronting their own secrets, Yahya and Rihab discover an unlikely refuge in each other.

Project Synopsis:

Yahya and his father Zakaria leave their home in Mecca for the first time during the busy Hajj season and travel to Berlin to treat Zakaria's cancer. On their way to the airport, Yahya accidentally discovers a family secret that his father had buried, which further complicates their already troubled relationship before the journey starts. Upon arrival in Berlin, and to compensate for the spiritual loss of missing Hajj, Zakaria insists that he can only stay in an apartment on the Arab street, as far as possible from "sin". To help him with his unwanted task, Yahya hires Rihab, a traumatized Syrian nurse seeking a new life while protecting her own past secrets. While Yahya explores Berlin's nightlife, putting many of his prejudices to the test and struggling to deal with the family secret, Rihab is forced to spend extra hours with Zakaria. Despite Zakaria's demands and Yahya's constant attempts to expose the dark side of this "venerable Meccan Sheikh", Rihab finds comfort in the little piece of Mecca - their apartment. Mecca Berlin presents an unlikely encounter between two wounded souls in a city that welcomes and rejects them at the same time. Both away from "home", they somehow find refuge in each other.



Mujtaba Saeed

Co-Writer and Director

Mujtaba Saeed is a filmmaker from Saudi Arabia. In 2006, he moved to Germany and studied Film Directing at the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg. Mujtaba is best known for his short films "Green Lemon", "The Compass", "Darkness is a Color", and the award winner "Zawal" produced by ARTE Germany. Mujtaba also directed 30 episodes of the MBC drama "Love Without Limits", and his debut feature documentary "The Last Day of Ramadan" commissioned by the German national television channel (ARD). In 2015, Mujtaba was awarded the Best Saudi Film Director in the MBC competition, "With Saudi Eyes". He is the co-founder of the first independent Saudi Film Association. Currently, Mujtaba is developing two feature narratives, "Mecca, Berlin", and "Drowning" which was supported by the Saudi Film Commission - Daw' Film Competition, and won the Best Feature Screenplay Award at the Saudi Film Festival (2022). Mujtaba's work explores themes of intercultural contexts, identity, and dilemmas of human existence.



Ghiath Al Mhitawi

Co-Writer

Ghiath Al Mhitawi is a playwright, dramaturge, and scriptwriter from Damascus. He holds a bachelor's degree in Theatre Studies from the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts in Damascus, Syria. He attended several writing workshops in major theaters in London and Berlin. His first play, "The Final Return", was presented at the Royal Court Theatre (London) in 2015. His second play, "The Abyss", premiered at the Edinburgh International Festival 2019 as part of the International Climate Crisis plays. Since 2019, he has been studying for a Master of Arts in Screenwriting and Dramaturgy at the Babelsberg Film University KONRAD WOLF, where he wrote and directed two short films selected in many international festivals, winning several prizes. He is currently co-writing in the ZDF series 'Echt' and many other film projects and series in Germany and the Middle East.



Nadia Eliawat

Producer

Nadia Eliawat is a Jordanian producer and screenwriter. In 2015, she established the Screen Project production company in Jordan. In 2022, she joined the UAE-based Ta Films as a CEO and Creative Producer alongside the industry's veterans Sangeeta Desai and Shivani Pandya. Nadia is best known for producing and co-writing the Lebanese box-office hit "Mahbas" (Solitaire) (2016), with over 110,000 admissions in the MENA release, the Jordanian film "When Monaliza Smiled" (2012), and the first OSN original feature "Yellow Bus" (2023). In 2017, Nadia managed Dubai Film Market; the business hub of Dubai Film Festival. She was also an Associate Professor of Film at the American University in Dubai (2010-2017). Currently, Nadia is developing two feature films by the Saudi filmmaker Mujtaba Saeed, "Mecca Berlin" and "Drowning", and the Yemeni feature "The Station", which has received several funds including HBF, DFI, and Jordan Film Fund and was part of Cannes' L'Atelier (2020).

Director's Intention:

The story of Mecca-Berlin started from the deferred dream of a seemingly desperate young teenager, who fled his Saudi city to Berlin, which instilled in him a curiosity that was not devoid of hope. And since we only dream of that which preoccupies us, an early desire was ignited in me to truly search for my identity in the vast and pluralistic space of Berlin. With my growing feeling that I was left alone facing this huge mountain of questions without any alternative or way out, I understood the use of all those keys I possessed, which built for me a solid cultural bridge to cross between East and West, giving way for that magical will inside me to explode in search of answers to all those questions that occupied my mind. "He who looks outward, dreams, and he who looks inward, wakes up."

Production Company:
Ta Films Sharjah Media City,
Sharjah, UAE
<https://tafilms.ae/>
Contact: nadia@tafilms.ae,
production@tafilms.ae
Producer: Nadia Eliawat

Estimated Budget: \$2,500,000

MY FATHER KILLED BOURGUIBA

Genre(s): Documentary
Country(ies): Tunisia, Qatar
Language(s): Arabic

Logline:

The 1987 coup in Tunisia was not just a political event, but also a personal family matter that dragged me into a conflict I never chose.

Project Synopsis:

This film depicts the journey of director Fatma Riahi in search of her father's story. A journey that began 15 years after his death and 33 years after his decision to be a part of a group that planned to overthrow the Tunisian regime of Bourguiba in a military coup. Fatma's father's aspiration for change turned her family and personal life upside down. She has since been beset by a multitude of increasingly pressing questions. A mother in her thirties herself, she is now trying to understand her father's choices and their impact on the little girl she was then and the woman she has become. To unearth the story, Fatma dives into a memory box that is full of family photos and exchanged prison letters, official archives that touched her life, and drawings she used to draw for and with her father when she was a child. She also delves into discussions with her father's comrades and their siblings who share the same memories and experiences in order to confront them with their hidden feelings. Ultimately, Fatma seeks salvation from the heavy burden of the past to hopefully heal the open wounds of a conflict she didn't choose.



Fatma Riahi
Writer and Director

Fatma studied cinema and television technologies in Tunisia. She worked as a producer and director on short documentaries in Tunisia. In 2011, Fatma made a mid-length TV documentary, Tunisia... The Revolution Continues, about the Tunisian revolution. In the same year, she joined Al Jazeera Documentary as a producer in the Production Department. In 2015, she started working on her first feature film, A Haunted Past, which was nominated in IDFA 2018 for the first appearance competition. It was also screened in the special selection at Hot Docs 2019, RIDM 2019, Costa Rica Festival International de Cine 2019, and the Durban International Film Festival. A Haunted Past won ANHAR Award for the best human rights film 2019 at KARAMA Film Festival – Amman and The Bronze Tanit in JCC (Carthage Film Festival) 2019. Currently, Fatma is working on her second feature film: My Father Killed Bourguiba.



Louai Haffar
Co-Writer

Louai Haffar is a documentary film producer and writer based in Istanbul, Turkey. He has previously worked as a commissioning editor and creative consultant for various media outlets, including the Al Jazeera Documentary Channel. He produced numerous TV and cinema documentaries, including Memory in Khaki (2017), The Fifth Story (2020) and Transfer (2021). Louai holds a Master's degree in Sociology from George Mason University. He is interested in content analysis, narrative techniques, storytelling styles and forms.



Sarra Ben Hassan
Producer

Sarra has more than twenty years of experience in the executive production of local and international projects for various Tunisian companies. In 2018, she followed international programs dedicated to producers (EAVE, Doha Producer's Lab, Cinemart) before producing the Oscar-nominated short film 'Brotherhood' by Meryam Joobeur, with whom she joined forces to found the company, Instinct Bleu, dedicated to the production of young talents' works. Her first feature film 'Motherhood' by Meryam Joobeur is currently in post-production. 'Between Heaven and Earth' by Nadia Rais will be her second feature film, her first experience in animation after participating in the CEE animation program in 2021.

Director's Intention:

In 2017, a few years after the Tunisian revolution, my sister and I were invited to give our testimony in front of the Truth and Dignity Commission regarding the ill-treatment and harassment of our family by Bin Ali's regime. Gradually, I began feeling emotionally relieved to share my story. Surprisingly, I found other people—activists or victims—who went through similar experiences, yet no one dared to speak up. These experiences usually leave their scars for generations. Such distress supposedly ends once a country transits from dictatorship into democracy and gives space to protagonists to openly address their grievances. Through dialogue, I aim to break the long-standing chain of silence between two—or even three—generations. Despite my efforts to protect my children from getting involved in this matter, the film I am making may serve as a catalyst to encourage their activism in the future by connecting them to their grandfather.

Production Company:
Instinct Bleu
Tunisia
+216 22545981
sarra@instinctbleu.com
Producer: Sarra Ben Hassan

Estimated Budget: \$307,000
Acquired: \$60,000
Financers: DFI (Doha Film Institutes)
AFAC (Arab Film Fund for Arts and Culture)
Aljazeera Documentary Channel

THE NIGHT WHISPERER

Genre(s): Elevated Thriller

Country(ies): Saudi Arabia

Language(s): Arabic

Logline:

A lost traveler with no memories arrives at an isolated desert village whose inhabitants are cursed with mysterious insomnia, where he finds an unlikely ally in a sixteen-year-old girl who helps him uncover the truth about the town as well as himself.

Project Synopsis:

Yousef, 40s, stumbles upon a remote, enchanted village. With no memory of who he is or where he has been, he is taken in by the villagers who have a secret routine. Each night, mysterious smoke blankets the village, inducing sleep in all its inhabitants. As Yousef recovers, he finds himself complacently fitting into village life and his existence becomes an endless cycle of monotony: work, eat, sleep, repeat... Yousef befriends Hind and her teenage daughter, Hasnaa, both of whom harbor their own secrets. Hind staunchly defends the village's traditions, while Hasnaa dreams of life beyond the village walls. When Hasnaa reveals to Yousef a way to avoid the enchanted smoke, Yousef starts to regain his memories, realizing that Hind and Hasnaa are his wife and daughter, and his forgotten purpose was to take them to the outside world. Ultimately, Hind's fierce attachment to their home becomes clear, and in a heart-wrenching realization, Yousef understands that he can't convince Hind to leave, nor can he bear to live without her. Instead, he helps his daughter Hasnaa escape, ensuring she finds a life beyond the village, even if it means he may never see her again.



Lina Mahmoud

Writer and Director

Lina Mahmoud is a multi-talented artist who began her career as an actress in 2016 before transitioning into the world of writing and directing. Lina appeared in several TV series, short films, and one feature film, where she honed her acting skills and developed a deep appreciation for the art of performance. Driven by her desire to expand her artistic horizons, Lina ventured into directing, and wrote and directed her first short film, entitled "Sarmadya." Lina joined the MEMI program (Middle East Media Initiative) in 2022 to develop her TV series where she showcased her unique storytelling sensibilities. She has also participated in a specialized pitching program designed to connect emerging writers with industry executives. The program provided her with an invaluable platform to pitch her TV series concept to key decision-makers in the industry.



Chris Hanada

Producer

Chris Hanada is the co-founder of Retrofit Films, a Los Angeles-based production company. Hanada graduated from Loyola Marymount University's film school before starting his career working for several years at Tom Cruise and Paula Wagner's Cruise/Wagner Productions. After working in production and development, Hanada and his producing partner Tanner Kling launched Retrofit Films in 2005. Retrofit's productions have won Producers' Guild, Webby, and WGA awards as well as Emmy nominations. Hanada has produced comedy pilots for ABC Digital, and the action-comedy film Golden Revenge (co-produced with Conan O'Brien) for Warner Bros. B.R.C. Retrofit's original sci-fi action series Breakwater premiered on Snapchat in spring 2022, and the feature film Dealing with Dad recently completed a festival run, garnering a dozen awards in twenty festivals. He is a member of The Producers' Guild of America, and the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

Director's Intention:

This film explores the intricacies of human relationships in a complicated world through a magical realism lens, as it unveils the extraordinary bond between a father and daughter, a husband and wife, and an individual with his community. Growing up in a conservative community deeply shaped my perspective on life. I find myself portraying magical scenarios as a means to comprehend the world around me; to unravel what seems illogical. There is a piece of me in each of the main characters. In Hasnaa, I am the young spirit who wants to see the world. In Yousef, I feel his desire to protect his family. And in Hind, I'm driven by the devotion to my home and the drive to settle down. Through these characters' unconventional journeys, The Night Whisperer explores the transformative power of love, acceptance, and the strength of the human spirit.

Production Company:
Retrofit Films
8549 Wilshire Blvd #5118, Beverly Hills, CA
90211, USA
+1 323 931 0999
chris@retrofitfilms.com
Producer: Chris Hanada

Estimated Budget: \$1,976,000
Financing acquired: None
Financers: N/A

TEMPORARY LIVES

Genre(s): Fiction, Drama

Country(ies): France, Norway, Syria

Language(s): English, Arabic, Norwegian

Logline:

A Syrian teenager reluctantly seeks asylum in Norway as per his estranged father's wishes, but desperate to return home, he sabotages their asylum case. As their journey unfolds, the father-son duo must confront their painful past, navigating a strained relationship.

Project Synopsis:

Salim, a Syrian teenager, arrives against his will in Norway to seek asylum with his father, Rafiq, a former political prisoner. Salim is torn between going back home—despite the war—and transforming a strained relationship with a father he doesn't really know. Although Rafiq hopes for a brighter future for his son, his trauma makes it difficult to fully connect with Salim. During their time at a temporary refugee camp, they encounter other refugees, each with their own stories and struggles, providing a glimpse into the collective experience of displaced individuals and helping them navigate the complexities of their relationship. Facing the challenges of their asylum case, including the revelation that Salim has sabotaged their chances of staying in Norway, their fragile bond is tested. The threat of deportation forces them to confront their past.



Wessam Hachicho

Writer and Director

Born in Syria in 1983, Wessam Hachicho is a writer and director based in Norway. She began her artistic journey behind the camera, giving her a solid background in visual storytelling. She has a bachelor's degree in film from Westerdals Oslo ACT. Her short film "The One Who Sees" was selected by Women Cinemakers as the best film for new media artists and independent filmmakers. An alumna of LIM, Creative Europe – MEDIA Program, she was a jury member for the Film Fra Sør Festival/Documentary. She is the head of a film training production program based in Turkey. She is obsessed with the human experience and how the past affects the present and the future. Thematically, her work has always dealt with loneliness, isolation, trauma, and individualists with whom she feels connected.



Amélie Quéret

Producer

Amélie Quéret graduated with a degree in German Culture and Literature at Rennes II University. After working in the film industry in Latin America, Amélie graduated at l'Atelier Paris-Ludwigsburg, an advanced degree between France's Fémis, and Germany's Film Akademie, specializing in European co-production. After that, she started working as a line producer and producer. In 2014, she founded Respiro Productions, where she produced around 15 short films all selected and awarded in multiple festivals. She likes to focus on narrative films that are humanly and socially engaged, keeping an artistic requirement while bearing in mind the audience. It can be through various forms: fiction, documentary, short or feature, and from several geographical and cultural origins. In the fall of 2023 in the Paris region, Quéret began shooting Stéphane Ly-Cuong's musical, In the Nguyen Kitchen, her first feature as a main producer.

Director's Intention:

Temporary Lives is a deeply personal project, reflecting my journey as an exile in Norway for the past eleven years. Despite my efforts to build a new life here, I still feel a sense of temporariness and unease, struggling with the guilt of safety amidst the turmoil back home. This film is not just another story about refugees; it's a nuanced exploration of a father-son relationship strained by past traumas. The characters in the film are not victims seeking pity; they are flawed individuals trying to survive in a broken system. I aim to challenge the audience's perceptions and evoke empathy for these imperfect characters. This film serves as a document of human experiences, aiming to resonate with refugees and non-refugees alike, bridging the gap between different human experiences and fostering understanding among viewers, regardless of time and place.

Production Company:
Respiro Productions
 2, La Rue
 22800 Plaine-- Haute
 France
contact@respiroproductions.com
Producer: Amélie Quéret

Estimated budget: 2,300,000 €
Financing acquired: None
Financers: N/A

THE GIRL AND THE MISSING BED

Genre(s): Drama, Satire

Country(ies): Jordan, Lebanon

Language(s): Arabic

Logline:

A young woman desperately looks for her boyfriend after arriving at a bureaucratic compound that processes dead people onto the next life.

Project Synopsis:

In the middle of the desert, Rita arrives on a bus along with other people to a bureaucratic governmental compound responsible for processing the dead people to move on to the next life. Newcomers are forced to follow a strict routine to apply for their permits, unaware of the time they are going to spend there, and what happens in the next life. Rita's boyfriend Oday was supposed to arrive there with her, based on their agreement. It was the only way for them to be together after escaping from their prejudiced parents, who were completely opposed to them being in a relationship due to different religions. However, while desperately looking for Oday upon her arrival, Rita fails to find him. After meeting the troubled Sheikh Darwish and the teenagers he takes care of, Rita is encouraged to escape the compound into the vast desert, determined to find out the reason why Oday is not there with her. Her love for him and the promise they made for each other inspire her to find him and bring him back with her, whatever the cost.



Samer Z.M. Battikhi

Director and Writer

Samer is a film director and writer who has been working in the film industry in Jordan since 2015. He began his career as an Assistant Director, working on several local and international projects. He has directed, written, and produced several short films, most notably the films "Arnoos", "Kroka", and "For Good Luck", all of which were selected to compete at international film festivals around the world. He is currently working on developing his first feature, "The Girl and the Missing Bed," selected at the Red Sea Lodge in 2023. He is also working on two series bibles, "Propaganda", now in talks to be produced by an international streamer, and "The Shopping Square", developed under the Halaqat program at The Royal Film Commission in Jordan in 2022.



Fatma Racha Shehadeh

Producer

The American-Jordanian producer, director, and cinematographer produced, wrote and directed several short films under her own production company, Roarpark. She is currently in post-production for her debut feature documentary, funded by PaCCS - the University of Cambridge, the Economic and Social Research Council - UKRI and produced by Roarpark. With over 30 short films and a feature film as a director of photography, her work has earned recognition at international film festivals. As a director, she won the Bronze Palm at the Mexico International Film Festival for "Zikra", The Fevoss Prize at the San Giò Video Festival for "Muse", and first runner-up and Best Screenplay at the 48-Hours-Film Project's "Yes We Cannes" competition for "Hamra. No, Badaro". She is currently developing "Not Really a Match", her short film produced by Roarpark, which received the Short Film Development Award at Malmo Industry Days during the Malmo Film Festival 2023, as well as producing the feature "The Girl and the Missing Bed" by Samer Z.M. Battikhi, participating in the Red Sea Lodge 2023.

Director's Intention:

In life's bewildering maze of love, religion, and death, I draw inspiration. The uncertainty of the afterlife fuels my creativity. Do we reunite or remain forever estranged there? These questions inspire my emotionally charged project—a tale of forbidden love in the Middle East. Imagine a love-defying norm, where a Muslim and a Christian navigate societal prejudice. Their love transcends life's bounds, risking all for an afterlife union. Our controlled society, a smaller bureaucracy under a larger one, obscures life's essence. We often overlook the profound tapestry of each person's story. We reduce individuals to their visible parts, forgetting their deeper lives. Does love, the most profound emotion, surpass earthly limits? Love endures even when those we cherish have passed. I'm captivated by life's absurdity, my lens to tell Rita's story. She quests in the bureaucratic afterlife, determined to reunite with her lover, capturing love, absurdity, and the human experience.

Production Company:

Roarpark Films

Beirut, Lebanon

+961 70706459

roarparkfilms@gmail.com

http://roar-park.com/

Producer: Fatma Racha Shehadeh

Estimated Budget: \$792,228

Financing Acquired: None

Financers: N/A

THE MIDDLE ONE

Genre(s): Drama, Comedy
 Country(ies): Saudi Arabia, France
 Language(s): Arabic

Logline:

Reem, a 28-year-old woman from Riyadh, chooses a different path for her life, far away from familial and societal expectations.

Project Synopsis:

Reem, one of the middle children in a typical Riyadh family of three daughters, has always felt like the odd one out. She has spent her life trying to fit into this family and to be the child her parents decided she should be. At 28, she has worked hard to get everything she thought she could wish for: a successful career, a big social circle and a soon-to-be husband. Yet, she feels disconnected from herself and as though she is being asphyxiated, leading her to question her beliefs. When she figures out she doesn't want to start her own family, it shocks and disrupts everyone around her. She suddenly gets a taste of freedom, which is both exciting and terrifying, by temporarily moving in with her best friend Noura. But the two are on completely different tracks and their friendship doesn't feel the same. As Reem's fears of losing her family and her sense of belonging materialize, she bravely takes a leap of faith. She goes on a road trip alone, where good and bad experiences, as well as encounters, will help her decide what she wants her own future to be like.



Sarah Almuneef
 Writer and Director

Sarah Almuneef is an emerging film writer, director and producer who lives in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. She started studying filmmaking at the American University in Dubai in 2013 and attended La Fémis Film School in Paris. Her film "Acceptance" was shown at the 2018 Berlinale as part of a special Saudi Film program. Her short "Twenty-Twenty Faces" screened at the Saudi Film Festival and at the Misk Art Institute in Riyadh. She is currently working on various short films, including "Over My Dead Body", which will premiere in early 2024. "The Middle One" will be her debut feature.



Séverine Tibi
 Producer

Séverine Tibi is a film producer from Cannes and now living in LA. After working in sponsorship at the British Film Institute in London, she co-founded the Cannes-based Sevana Films in 2017. She has produced various films in several countries and with international teams, which have screened at festivals across the globe, including Locarno, Toronto and Palm Springs. She is currently in pre-production on a fiction feature in Lebanon and developing two shorts, in addition to "The Middle One" in Saudi Arabia. Séverine regularly attends events and festivals as a consultant through talent development programs, and to discover the next generation of storytellers. Over the past few years, she was a Film Mentor at SXSW, a Rotterdam Lab and Zurich Film Festival Academy participant, and a winner of the UK Film & TV Charity's John Brabourne Award. In 2022, she was selected to be part of the Sundance Producers Summit.

Director's Intention:

Reem is a woman who grew up when Saudi Arabia was extremely conservative but is now living her late twenties in a different reality. In THE MIDDLE ONE, she is questioning whether any of her decisions have really been coming from her or rather out of the belief that they were what everyone around her wanted her to choose. But the process of changing is petrifying because Reem is scared to lose her family, her friends and her place in society. If she is herself, will she lose her mother's love? How will her father cope in the house? Will it have repercussions on her younger sister? Will she end up being alone forever? Once she has left her family house, Reem comes to realize that the costs of her actions are real and that some things will have to be sacrificed, but she owes it to herself to take the plunge.

Production Company:
 Sevana Films
 16 rue Coste Corail, 06400 Cannes, France
 +33 651730791 (FR) / +1 (424) 4289575 (US)
 severine.tibi@sevanafilms.com
 Producer: Séverine Tibi

Estimated Budget: \$956,500
Financing acquired: None
Financers: N/A

THE SUN SEES EVERYTHING

Genre(s): Drama

Country(ies): Lebanon

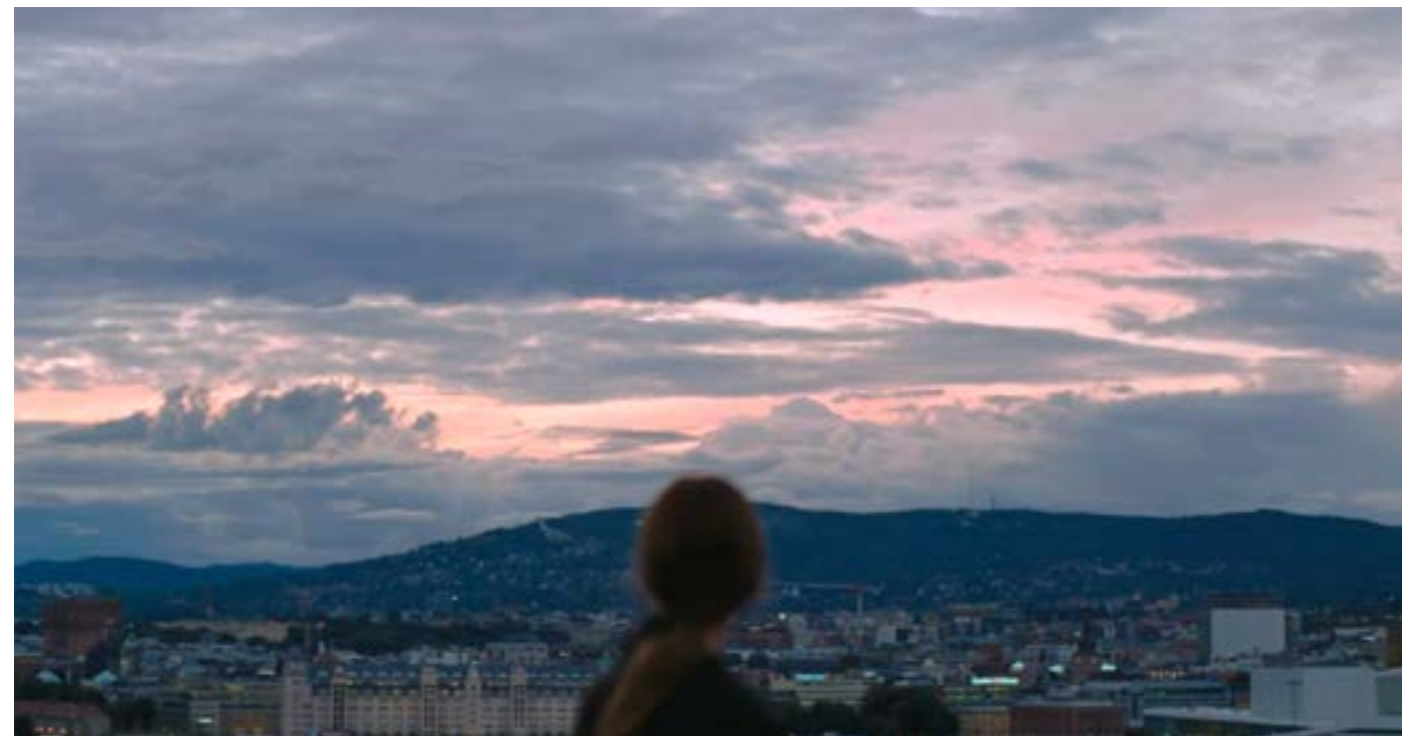
Language(s): Arabic

Logline:

In today's Beirut, Neyrouz and her two children are shaken by her husband's— their father's— sudden death. Soon after, she discovers that he left them with a debt she needs to pay off.

Project Synopsis:

In present-day Beirut, Neyrouz, a young mother of two, is thrown off balance after the sudden death of her husband. While trying to navigate the challenges of being a widow and adapting to a new reality in a country plagued by a severe financial collapse, Neyrouz is confronted with an unforeseen burden: a debt left behind by her late husband. With no alternative but to safeguard the apartment where they live, Neyrouz must pay the debt, in secret, to protect her children from the harsh truth. However, when 17-year-old Carla discovers her father's secret, she feels a profound sense of betrayal, driving her to embark on a quest to uncover the reality about her father. As their parallel journeys collide, together they confront a haunting and difficult past. This transformative journey leads to the revelation of hidden truths, not only about the departed man but also about each other, allowing them to break free from a web of lies. All the while, they care for a persistent three-year-old who endlessly wonders when his father will return.



Wissam Tanios

Writer and Director

Born to a Lebanese father and a Syrian mother, Wissam Tanios holds a bachelor's degree in Film Directing. In his films, he likes to portray characters facing grief, undergoing profound transformations, and adapting to new realities. Following the success of two short films showcased and awarded at numerous global film festivals, his first feature documentary, "We Are From There," premiered at the International Film Festival Rotterdam in 2020. Developed during the Global Media Makers Film Residency in Los Angeles, the film earned several awards, including Best Arab Film and Best Documentary Film at the Cairo International Film Festival. With critical acclaim, it was theatrically released in France, Egypt, and the UAE in 2022. Currently, Wissam is developing his first narrative feature, "The Sun Sees Everything," a project he began writing during his artist residency at the Cité des Arts in Paris.



Christian Eid

Producer

Christian Eid is a film producer with About Productions (Beirut). In 2010, he started his production career and has since worked as a production supervisor on more than 15 award-winning feature films that premiered in Cannes, Venice, Berlin and Toronto. His filmography includes "The Valley" by Ghassan Salhab, "Tramontane" by Vatche Boulghourjian, "1982" by Oualid Mouaness, "The Sea Ahead" by Ely Dagher, "Costa Brava, Lebanon" by Mounia Akl, among others. In 2020, he produced "We Are From There" by Wissam Tanios. In 2021, he produced "Memory Box" by Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige, which was selected in the Official Competition of Berlinale and sold to more than 40 territories. Christian is a Berlinale Talents, Global Media Makers, and Locarno Industry Academy alumnus.

Director's Intention:

I had no clue about the challenges my mother faced after my father's sudden death when I was three. I witnessed her, in her mid-30s, juggling a full-time job and bearing financial and psychological pressures. My teenage sister often took on a maternal role in my mother's absence. Growing up under the care of these two "mothers" was my norm. My father's absence remained unspoken; I never felt the urge to ask about him. When I turned 30, I became more aware of the weight my mother carried as a single mother, and grew curious about her past and about who my father was. This personal experience gave life to this fictional film in which I aim to explore the dynamics of a family trying to adapt to a new reality, but is continually shaken by secrets, all while exploring this question:

How do we grief someone we no longer love?

Production Company:

About Productions

Beirut, Lebanon

+33 7 85 42 22 38

christian@aboutproductions.com

Producer: Christian Eid

Estimated Budget: \$949,522

Financing Acquired: None

Financiers: N/A

A CHILDHOOD
DJELIYA, MEMORY OF MANDING
LOVE CONQUERS ALL
MADNESS AND HONEY
MIRACLE IN CELL NO.7
NOSTALGIA: A TALE IN FIRST CHAPTERS
SADNESS
SELFLESS
TANZANITE
THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON
THE STRANGER
THE TREASURE
THREE DAYS 1/3
WHEN I CLOSE MY EYES I SEE YOUR EYES

RED SEA SOUK PROJECTS

A CHILDHOOD

Genre(s): Hybrid Documentary-Animation

Country(ies): Palestine, France

Language(s): Arabic, English, Hebrew

Logline:

'A Childhood' reveals the bitter reality of child imprisonment and the grotesque human rights violations in the occupied West Bank. Through mobile phone footage, heart-wrenching testimonies, and spellbinding animation, the film offers a powerful exposé of a crisis largely ignored.

Project Synopsis:

'A Childhood' delves deep into the traumatic experiences of Palestinian children living under Israeli Occupation. Using a wealth of testimonies from NGOs and extensive mobile footage capturing abuses in the West Bank, the film paints a chilling picture. To bring their stories to life, animation reenacts the children's testimonies and their emotional journeys. Western celebrities lend their voices to these testimonies in English, amplifying this underrepresented issue to a broader audience. Rather than delving into the internationally recognized right to resist Occupation, the film centers on these children's raw, personal narratives, presenting them not as dramatic tools but as young souls with dreams, fears, and stories to tell. The documentary aims to humanize these children, casting them as more than numbers and allowing viewers to connect with them beyond preconceptions. Yet, 'A Childhood' doesn't shy away from the stark reality. It recognizes that these children's stories cannot be isolated from their traumatic experiences - Blindfolding, arrests, and the ever-present fear are daily reminders of the childhoods of which they've been robbed. Through their eyes, we see the profound mental and physical toll the Israeli Occupation exacts, a tragic loss of innocence played out daily.



Scandar Copti

Director

Scandar Copti is an Oscar-nominated filmmaker and visual artist. His first feature film 'Ajami' (co-directed by Yaron Shani), won the Camera d'Or Special Mention at the Cannes Film Festival and was nominated at the 82nd Academy Awards in the Best Foreign Film category. Scandar is the recipient of the prestigious Sutherland Trophy. Scandar was part of the team that launched the Doha Film Institute, where he headed the DFI's Education department until 2011. He then headed the Film and New Media program at NYU Abu Dhabi from 2014 to 2017. Currently, he is teaching filmmaking at NYUAD, working on the post-production of his upcoming feature film 'Happy Holidays,' and developing his documentary 'A Childhood.'



Tony Copti and Jiries Copti

Producers

Tony and Jiries Copti joined forces and founded Fresco Films. They recently produced 'The Stranger' (Palestine, Syria, Germany, Qatar) by Ameer Fakhre Eldin, Palestine's official Best International Feature Film submission at the 94th Academy Awards. 'Happy Holidays' (Palestine, Germany, France, Italy, Qatar) by Scandar Copti (to be released in 2024) and 'The Smugglers,' Tony's debut feature-length documentary. Fresco Films also provided production services to dozens of local and international film productions, including 'The Attack' by Ziad Doeir, 'Giraffada' by Rani Massalha, and 'All That's Left of You' by Cherien Daabis (currently in production).



Rita Dagher

Co-Producer

Rita Dagher has a track record in producing impactful and award-winning documentaries and feature films, such as 'A Prayer Before Dawn' by Jean-Stephane Sauvaire (Official Selection at Cannes 2017), 'Soy Nero' by Rafi Pitts (Berlinale 2016), 'My Enemy's Enemy' by Oscar-winner Kevin MacDonal. She co-produced Oliver Stone's documentary 'Persona Non-Grata' and was the Executive Producer of Chris Morris's 'Four Lions' and 'Shadow Dancer' directed by Oscar-winner James Marsh. In 2004, she was the Associate Producer of 'Fahrenheit 9/11' by Michael Moore.

Director's Intention:

'A Childhood' is my response as a filmmaker to the world's silence on the overwhelming evidence of human rights abuses against Palestinian children and to Western media's selective portrayal of global crises. I intend to interweave diverse narratives, bound more by overarching themes rather than a linear plot progression of a single subject. Through a blend of raw visual evidence, deeply personal testimonies, and animated interpretations of surreal moments—both those spoken of in solitary confinements and those I felt compelled to integrate—I aim to highlight the simplicity of everyday childhood experiences. Every facet is explored, from the serenity of a good night's sleep to the joys of playtime, school days, and the bonds of friendships and family occasions—these seemingly universal moments take on a different hue for children under the Israeli occupation. In sharing these stories, I aim to amplify the voices of the silenced and challenge audiences to confront the uncomfortable truths that too often remain unseen and unheard.

Production Company:
Fresco Films
Burj Al Sheikh Building,
Ramallah, Palestine
+972-54482225
Tony@frescofilms.com

Co-Producer:
Rita Dagher
Senorita Films, France

Estimated Budget (USD):
\$2,000,000
Financing Acquired: \$20,000
Financers: Red Sea Fund
(Saudi Arabia)

DJELIYA, MEMORY OF MANDING

Genre(s): Musical, Documentary

Country(ies): Burkina Faso

Language(s): Malinke, Dioula

Logline:

To follow his late father's footsteps and become "Djeli", the guardian of oral memory in West Africa, is Sékou's ambition. Torn between his desires and the obstacles of a chaotic society where the generation gap is glaring, will he succeed?

Project Synopsis:

Sékou Timité has one ambition: to follow in his late father's footsteps and become a "Djeli", a griot, guardian of the oral memory in West Africa. Being the only one of his siblings to take an interest in the obsolete art of the griot, he leaves his family and his Malian village behind and sets off to confront the world on the roads of the legendary Mandingo Empire. Torn between his desire for greatness, his family's material needs, and the time-consuming apprenticeship, he confronts the obstacles of a sometimes chaotic present and crosses paths with some of the region's greatest griots, as well as with ordinary people struggling with everyday life. His journey of initiation becomes a poetic portrait of West Africa in search of its common memory.



Boubacar Sangaré

Writer and Director

Boubacar Sangaré is the author of four short films, co-director of the documentary feature film 'An African Revolution, the Ten Days that Brought Down Blaise Compaoré', and director of 'Gold of Life,' released in 2023 and selected for the Berlinale Forum 2023 and several other festivals worldwide. His career as a writer-director continues with the development of several other projects, including the documentary 'Djeliya, Memory of the Manding,' which explores the initiatory journey of a young griot, as well as the fictional feature 'The Name You're Given'.



Mamounata Nikiéma

Producer

Specializing in creative documentary filmmaking and Communication for Development (CPD), Mamounata Nikiéma has been pursuing her career as a director since 2007 and as a producer (through Pilumpiku Production) since 2011. Since 2014, she has also been a trainer for documentary writing residencies in Bobo-Dioulasso. In 2018, she launched the Ciné-équipement event and the digital cinema platform www.sulunsuku.com in January 2019. During FESPACO 2021, Nikiéma was honored with the title of Knight of the Order of Merit, Arts, Letters, and Communication with the 'Cinematography' clasp.

Director's Intention:

In my family, local cultures were constantly mixing. Of course, ethnic differences existed and still exist, but the cohabitation had long been based on the feeling of a shared foundation and history. Sékou, like me, was born in Mali, and he still lives there with his family. This road movie calls for the staging of an inner voice that bears witness to the evolution of the main character's thoughts. We will sense Sékou's transformation through his looks or his conversations with people, griots, or his family over the phone. At various stages of the journey, Baba Sissoko recounts the epic of the Manding Empire, the myths of West Africa, and all interventions aimed at engaging Sékou. It's the voice of the memory of this African region as well as a spirit haunting Sékou. To me, it's the voice of Baba, acting as a storyteller for the viewer and a mentor for Sékou.

Production Company:
Pilumpiku Production
 Ouagadougou S/C 01 BP 68
 Ouagadougou 01, Burkina Faso
 (00226) 74690442
pilumpikuproduction@gmail.com

Co-Producers:
 Lully Grâce (Côte d'Ivoire),
 Sunuy Films (Sénégal), Mali (D'S
 Production)

Estimated Budget (USD): \$729,341
Financing Acquired: \$317,115
Financers: MCCAT/ST CNCA & PAIC/GC FDCT (Burkina Faso), Fonds Jeune Création Francophone, Fonds Image de la Francophonie, Hot Docs Blue Ice Dev, FOPICA (Senegal), Fonsic/ Clap ACP

LOVE CONQUERS ALL

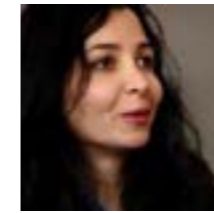
Genre(s): Drama, Romance
Country(ies): France, Lebanon
Language(s): French, Arabic

Logline:

On a rainy night in Beirut, a lonely 65-year-old widow meets a young immigrant worker without papers. They instantly fall in love.

Project Synopsis:

On a rainy night in Beirut, Susan, a 65-year-old widow, meets Osman, a young black Sudanese immigrant worker without papers. She's Palestinian, born in Lebanon, twice his age, forgotten in her well-ordered existence. They instantly fall in love. Unable to marry because of his illegal status, Osman moves in with Susan. The couple is shunned — their love has everyone up in arms. Susan's children, her neighbours, her co-workers, strangers in the street... Everyone is scandalised by their relationship. The same people who threw the country into a civil war now stand there, judging, even if the community later realises how much they need the couple. Will it last? Will Susan be able to overcome the trials and tribulations of her struggle against society? Will Osman, tempted to continue on to Europe, stay with Susan? The ambition of this film is to marry the poetry of this couple with the bleakness of their world — and of our own.



Danielle Arbid
Director and Writer

Danielle Arbid is a Franco-Lebanese director whose work includes fiction, documentary and experimental videos, both in France and in Lebanon. As of today, she has directed four short films, two documentaries, seven video essays as part of a vast project about her family (still ongoing), a TV film for Arte, a series for Canal+, and four fiction feature films. Danielle Arbid's fiction feature films have been selected at renowned festivals like Cannes, Toronto, NYFF, Tokyo Filmex, and more. Her last feature 'Passion Simple' was part of the Cannes Film Festival Official Selection in 2020, as well as presented in competition at San Sebastian and in Zurich, Lisboa, Lyon, and others. Danielle Arbid has been awarded thirteen prizes in total for her feature films. She also had five retrospectives in France and abroad of which Gijon, Florence, and La Rochelle. Easy Riders Films



Nadia Turincev
Producer

Nadia Turincev was born in Moscow (USSR) in 1970. She grew up in Paris and studied cultural anthropology at Paris X University. Turincev started her career in movies as a trainee, making sandwiches for Marcello Mastroianni, and as a set interpreter (Russian, French, English, Italian). She worked at ACE, Europa Cinemas, European Producers Club, EU Media program, as well as film festivals: in Cannes' Directors Fortnight selection committee, and Moscow IFF as artistic director. In 2007, she co-founded Rouge International and produced over 20 films. In 2019, she left Rouge and co-founded Easy Riders Films.



Omar El Kadi
Producer

Omar El Kadi was born in 1989 and grew up in Beirut (Lebanon), where he studied economics and management. At the age of 21, he joined Metropolis Cinema's programming and communication departments. In 2013, Omar became the head of acquisitions and sales in the Middle East and North Africa at MC Distribution (Mommy, Mustang, It Must Be Heaven, Memory Box, Hounds...) In 2016, Omar settled in Paris where he received an MBA in Finance from ESCP Business School. In May 2019, Omar co-founded Easy Riders Films. In parallel to his producer activities; he was appointed CEO of MC Distribution in early 2023.



Georges Schoucair
Co-Producer

Founder and CEO of About Productions, Georges Schoucair developed and produced critically acclaimed and award-winning independent movies and has actively contributed to the establishment of an attractive and globally acknowledged environment for film investments in Lebanon, and to the development of the Lebanese cinema, one of the most promising cinemas in the Middle East today. As a producer, Georges was able to develop strong relationships with prominent Arab and international film professionals and closely worked with award-winning directors, such as Kaouther Ben Hania and Jean-Luc Godard. His films have been screened at prestigious film festivals such as Cannes, Berlinale, Toronto and Venice, among others.

Director's Intention:

The love of Susan and Osman makes me dream... It relieves my anger and consoles me. It relieves my helplessness, the helplessness aroused in me by current events, by the refugee crises we witness without being able to do much about it. All those people wandering the world, lost and wounded. The foul, racist discourse that is gradually becoming louder and louder. "Love Conquers All" is a film where the ideal prevails. Susan and Osman fall in love the moment they meet. She's Palestinian white, he's Sudanese black, she's twice his age and yet they impose their love in the face of the haters, as a sign of radiant health in an ailing society. The film is above all a portrait of this modest couple, in search of freedom, locked into conventions that don't suit them, ahead of their time. A courageous woman and a vulnerable man struggle against a cruel society, and when contaminated by this cruelty, they fight to save their love.

Production Company:
Easy Riders Films
7 place Franz Liszt, 75010, Paris,
France
+33 6 60 59 89 13
omar@easyridersfilms.com

Co-Producer:
About Productions, Lebanon

Estimated Budget (USD):
\$1,010,216
Financing Acquired: \$170,000
Financers: MC Distribution,
Private Equity

MADNESS AND HONEY DAYS

Genre(s): Tragedy, Dark Comedy

Country(ies): Iraq, Canada

Language(s): Arabic

Logline:

Salem, an audacious theater director, insults President Saddam Hussein on stage and is sentenced to death. He is exiled to a Baghdad psychiatric hospital, where he must prove his insanity while facing execution if they declare him mentally fit.

Project Synopsis:

After offending President Saddam Hussein on stage, 27-year-old theater director Salem manages to escape death and the punishment of tongue-cutting by convincing the Ba'athist court of his insanity. Embracing madness, Salem spends months exiled inside a psychiatric hospital, while the execution is lurking outside if the physicians announce him mentally fit.

While in the hospital, Adyan, a 25-year-old doctor, becomes emotionally drawn to Salem's talent and skills, leading to a surreal love affair between the mad patient and his doctor. Soon, Salem attempts to escape from the hospital but fails. During this time, Adyan uncovers the truth behind his act of insanity. The authorities learn of Salem's escape and try to apprehend and return him to prison. But Adyan saves him, confirming that her patient needs treatment and keeping the learned truth. Salem, trying to maintain his sanity, starts writing a play inspired by Hamlet with the hospital residents as its heroes. Using the Shakespearian style, he gathers actors and assigns roles to them.

The play is successfully performed, despite Adyan's manager's ban, and reaches the ears of President Saddam Hussein through the Iraqi media coverage of the historical event. The President sends a written recommendation, and the regime starts to take care of the patients. Salem receives a certificate of appreciation—the Presidential acknowledgment of his madness: the document that spares him from the gallows.



Ahmed Yassin Al-Daradji

Writer and Director

An award-winning writer-director from Iraq based in the UK. He began his cinematic journey as an alumnus of Berlinale Talents in 2018. The success of his short film "My Name is Mohammed" earned him a place at the London Film School, where he pursued his passion for storytelling and cinematic excellence, earning an MA degree with distinction. In 2015, his short film "Children of God" brought him the Muhr Award for Best Arab Short, and the Jury Award at the Disabled Film Festival in Cannes. Ahmed's debut feature film, "Hanging Gardens," premiered at the Venice Film Festival in 2022 and captivated audiences globally with its compelling narrative and exceptional craftsmanship. The film earned the Golden Yusr for Best Feature Film and the Yusr Award for Best Cinematic Achievement at the Red Sea International Film Festival, among other prestigious awards. The crowning achievement for Ahmed was the selection of "Hanging Gardens" to represent Iraq at the 96th Academy Awards (Oscars) competition.



Maytham Jbara

Producer

Maytham is an Iraqi, Toronto-based film writer and producer. He honed his skills by studying Cinema and Television at the University of Baghdad and attending numerous workshops on various aspects of film production. In 2022 and 2023, Maytham was selected for the Accelerator Fellowship, as well as the European Audio-Visual Entrepreneurs (EAVE) On-Demand Access Program for Producers presented by the National Screen Institute and Canada Media Fund. Most of Maytham's films have also been granted funding by Canada, Ontario, and Toronto Arts Councils, Telefilm Canada, and the Red Sea International Film Festival, among others. Maytham's work includes the feature film "Hanging Gardens" by Ahmed Yassin, and several short and feature films.

Director's Intention:

The reality inside a mental institution is a fantasy devoid of truth. Therefore, I do not deny that the characters in this film may transcend imagination, granting them a significant degree of realism.

Fortunately, I lived 15 minutes away from the only psychiatric hospital in Iraq. I was going back and forth to school, walking by the hospital building, boasting a giant red picture of President Saddam Hussein to which my older brother Taha would bow every time we passed the hospital door, believing that the President was a prophet.

This film is to confront the audience with the story of individuals who possess a heightened level of awareness, upon whom my characters are based. It treads a fine line between sanity and insanity. Amid chaos and sweetness, I strive to present a visual feast brimming with human feelings and examine the perspective of my protagonists within the hospital.

The film revolves around a triangle, posing the question: which is more insane, the Saddam Regime, the US occupation, or life inside the hospital?

Production Company:
Purattu Film Production
 2 Ur Street, 54 / 343 Iraq, Baghdad
 IQ +9640791922793, CA
 +16475682163
 info@purattufilmcenter.com

Estimated Budget (USD): \$1,500,000
Financing Acquired: \$105,000
Financers: Telefilm Canada, Canada Art Council, Arab Radio & Television Network (ART) (Saudi Arabia), Network of Arab Alternative Screen (NAAS), Busan Film Festival (APM) (Korea), Tangled Art+ Disability (Canada)

MIRACLE IN CELL NO.7

Genre(s): Drama, Suspense

Country(ies): Lebanon, UAE

Language(s): Arabic

Logline:

A little girl and her intellectually disabled father's idyllic village life is shattered when he is framed for the death of a child whose father is an ex-warlord.

Project Synopsis:

Lebanon, 1997. Ziad is a simple fisherman and salt harvester who lives peacefully with his daughter Zeina and his father Ibrahim. Ziad, who is on the autism spectrum, is a source of both wonder and ridicule in his neighborhood. Ibrahim, the grandfather, acts as a father figure to both Ziad and Zeina, while Tarek, a former warlord turned politician, becomes his rival as he aims to take their coastal land for a development project.

Tragedy strikes when Ziad tries to save a drowning child but fails. The child is Lea, Tarek's daughter. Tarek accuses Ziad of murder and, using his political influence, coerces a false confession. This confession, under Lebanese law, leads to the death penalty. Ziad is incarcerated in Lebanon's notorious Roumieh prison. Inside, Ziad's simplicity endears him to fellow inmates, including the cell leader, who helps him reunite with Zeina before his execution.

On the outside, Zeina's teacher begins to scratch beneath the surface and unravel the discrimination underlying Ziad's case. Simultaneously, the skeptical warden uncovers the flaws in the case and Tarek's corrupt interference. It becomes a race against time as Ziad battles an unjust legal system that shows no mercy to the vulnerable.



MIRACLE IN CELL NO.7



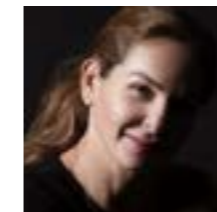
Dina Amer
Director

Dina is an award-winning filmmaker and journalist. "You Resemble Me" was her feature film debut before which she helped produce the Oscar-nominated and Emmy award-winning documentary "The Square". Growing up between the US and Egypt, her work has focused on sharing nuanced human stories with a global audience. Previous to her film work, Dina was a celebrated journalist. She was an on-air correspondent for VICE, including "The Black Market Series".



Samer Aki
Co-Writer

Samer is a writer and a senior development producer at Front Row Productions where he collaborates on the curation of the film and TV slate, and works with regional filmmakers on developing their scripts and preparing them for production. He has a pair of projects in the development pipeline, including an original feature script "Driver". His other recent projects include the Netflix original "Perfect Strangers" starring Nadine Labaki and Mona Zaki. He has also co-produced music videos, documentaries, and features.



Mayada Al Hiraki
Delegate Producer

Mayada Al Hiraki is an accomplished executive producer who began her career in the music video industry where she had the privilege of working with some of the region's top celebrities, including Amr Diab and Nancy Ajram. Her collaboration with renowned director Nadine Labaki orchestrated a transformative shift in the music video industry. In 2004, Mayada established her own production company in Beirut producing award-winning music videos and TV commercials. Upon relocating to Dubai, she initiated The Story Tellers with a dedicated focus on feature films. She was the Executive Producer on Front Row's "Perfect Strangers" and recently completed her second feature film with them while preparing for several of her own exciting projects.



Zeina Daccache
Writer

Zeina produced the pioneering "12 Angry Lebanese" with inmates of Roumieh Prison, Lebanon in 2009, and together with the documentary that emerged, received international awards and led to the implementation of Law 463, reducing sentences for good behavior. Her second feature documentary, "Scheherazade's Diary", based on her production with female inmates, won ten international awards and pushed for the passing of the law regarding the protection of women from domestic violence. In 2021, her third feature documentary "The Blue Inmates" about mentally ill offenders was released.



Gianluca Chakra
Producer

Gianluca is the CEO of the Middle East distribution company Front Row Filmed Entertainment, which he created in 2003 under the aegis of his father. Alongside its theatrical distribution, it is a pioneer in digital distribution as the first in the region to do premium VOD releases, sign exclusive aggregation agreements, and work with Netflix. In 2021, Gianluca turned to production and launched "Perfect Strangers", the first local language production for Netflix, triggering a first-look deal with the giant streamer. Gianluca is now in post-production for an original atmospheric drama, as well as a Saudi short.

Director's Intention:

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." ~ Martin Luther King Jr.

'Miracle In Cell Number 7' is ultimately about finding that light amidst the darkness as it takes an intimate look at what it entails for people to remain true to what they believe is just. In spotlighting an intellectually challenged man and his young daughter who run up against corruption and discrimination both socially and institutionally, we see the world through the father's eyes, with purity and child-like innocence, as he is impossibly misunderstood by most. Unable to do much for themselves, it's for the community to stand up for them.

Production Company:
Front Row Filmed Entertainment
3305, Citadel Tower, Dubai, UAE
+97142865644
gc@frontrowent.ae

Estimated Budget (USD): \$2,500,000
Financing Acquired: \$900,000 = Pre-sale approx. \$800,000 + Equity I \$100,000
Financers: Front Row and Streaming partners

NOSTALGIA: A TALE IN FIRST CHAPTERS

Genre(s): Drama

Country(ies): Syria, Germany, Italy

Language(s): Arabic, Italian, English

Logline:

After a decade chasing his dreams abroad, Syrian opera singer Malik returns home. But his cousin's sudden suicide sends him on another journey of self-discovery.

Project Synopsis:

The story follows Malik, a successful Syrian opera singer who, after more than a decade of residing in Italy, returns to his village in the Golan Heights for a short visit. Upon his arrival, his loved ones celebrate his comeback through a long and joyful evening. However, their joy is short-lived as news of his cousin Omar's suicide hits them hard the next morning. Gossip and speculation about the cause of his death begin to spread, but Malik, who shares many fond memories with Omar from their childhood, is convinced that he is the reason for his cousin's death. Haunted by strange feelings of guilt and plagued by emotions, Malik seeks solace in his rekindled relationship with his first love, Salma. But will he find the closure he needs before he disappears again?



Ameer Fakher Eldin

Director and Writer

Ameer Fakher Eldin is a Syrian writer and director based in Hamburg. He was born in Kyiv, Ukraine, in 1991 to Syrian parents from the occupied Golan Heights. His debut film 'The Stranger' premiered at the 78th Venice International Film Festival, where it won the Edipo Re Award, and was selected as Palestine's official entry for Best International Feature Film at the 94th Academy Awards, followed by great acclaim at the 43rd Cairo International Film Festival receiving two awards: The Prize for Best Arab Film in the festival, and the Shadi Abd El Salam Prize for Best Film in the International Critics Week Competition. Additionally, 'The Stranger' received nominations for Best Director and won the Best Cinematography award at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards. It is now available for streaming on Netflix, making it accessible to viewers worldwide.



Dorothe Beinemeier

Producer

Dorothe Beinemeier focuses on producing children's and family entertainment for TV and cinema, as well as high-quality arthouse films and drama series for international markets, with an emphasis on emerging talent from the Middle East. This is a passion that has shaped Dorothe's filmography and expertise up until today. Produced titles include Bruno Dumont's 'France' starring Lea Seydoux (Cannes 2021, Official Competition) and his most recent film 'L'empire' (Camille Cottin, Lyna Khoudri, Fabrice Luchini). Beinemeier's drama series include 'Sunshine Eyes' directed by Maria von Heland and awarded the Jury prize at Series Mania in Lilles in 2022, and the acclaimed international vampire youth series 'Heirs of the Night' (International Emmy Awards nominee, 2021). Dorothe is the proud producer of Ameer Fakher Eldin's award-winning debut 'The Stranger' (winner of CIFF Best Film, Best Director, and Edipore Award in Venice). The film premiered in 2021's selection of Giornate degli Autori in Venice and was Palestine's Academy Awards 2022 entry. Their next project 'Yunan' with an outstanding cast ensemble, Georges Khabbaz, Ali Suleiman, Hanna Schygulla, Sibel Kikelli, and Nidal Al Achkar, just finished shooting. The third film "Nostalgia: A Tale in First Chapters," is in development. Dorothe is a member of Ateliers du Cinéma Européen (ACE 21) and EAVE (2017), both training programs for selected European producers.

Director's Intention:

The cinematic journey of "Nostalgia: A Tale in First Chapters," introduces us to Malik, a renowned Syrian opera singer who, after years of pursuing his dreams abroad, returns to his village. This film serves as the concluding chapter in the "Nostalgic" trilogy, a journey I embarked upon with "The Stranger," exploring the yearning for an elusive future. In "Yunan," we delved into the longing for a past lost to war and national crises. "Nostalgia" flips the script, portraying Malik not as a victim, but as a troubled soul clinging to childhood memories, relentlessly seeking to revisit bygone days and spaces, all while wrestling with the relentless march of time that plagues humanity. What sets this film apart is its innovative narrative structure, "A Tale in First Chapters," comprising five chapters, each functions as the first chapter of the story, leaving audiences yearning for more while building a rich dramatic tapestry.

Production Company:
Red Balloon Film GmbH, Germany
Behringstrasse16B, 22765
Hamburg
+49 40 500 90 808
hello@redballoon-film.de

Co-Producer: Marco Valerio Fusco
Intramovies Srl, Italy
Via E. Manfredi 15, 00197 Rome
+39 06 45 777 930
mail@intramovies.com

Estimated Budget (USD):
\$3,385,440
Financing Acquired (USD):
\$58,187.25
Financers: MOIN Film Fund
Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein (GE),
Red Sea Fund (KSA)

SADNESS

Genre(s): Fiction

Country(ies): Central African Republic, France, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Language(s): Sango, French

Logline:

Sadness tells the story of a young woman who undergoes a terrible loss. This tragedy forces her to rethink her place in society and reinvent her life and identity as a Central African woman.

Project Synopsis:

Jenifer, a student at the University of Bangui, gives birth to a stillborn child. According to Central African tradition, she must not cry. She must forget "the child that was not" and project herself into a new pregnancy. But Jenifer's pain doesn't go away, and her partner begins to doubt her: is she ill, possessed? Jenifer's impossible mourning and the inability of those closest to her to understand her will shatter her relationship and her family but paradoxically lead Jenifer on the path to emancipation.



Emmanuela Lalanga

Director

She was born in the town of Bossemptélé in the Central African Republic in 1998. After completing a baccalauréat, she enrolled at the University of Bangui, where she obtained a degree in private law in 2022, and a Master 1 in Penal and Criminal Sciences in 2023. In 2020, was selected for a training course in film-making, run by CinéFabrique in Bangui, CAR. She wrote and directed her first short film, 'Pas avant le Bac', which tells the story of a young man who refuses to sleep with his girlfriend until he has passed his baccalauréat, a behavior that provokes incomprehension and rejection from those around him. A few months later, she wrote another short, 'Wali', which tells the story of a young woman who, in order to free herself from the financial guardianship of her husband, decides to become a motorcycle cab driver, a profession generally reserved for men.



Naël Marandin

Co-Screenwriter

Naël Marandin is an experienced French screenwriter and director. His second feature film, 'La Terre des hommes' (Beasts) was selected at the 2020 Cannes Critics' Week before going on to win multiple awards in film festivals. Naël went to the Central African Republic twice, in 2021 and 2022, to participate in the CinéBangui training program. This is where he met Emmanuela Lalanga for the first time and assisted her in her second short film.



Daniele Incalcaterra

Producer

Daniele Incalcaterra directed films in France, Russia, Italy, Bolivia, Argentina, and Paraguay. In 1990 in Bolivia, he directed 'Chapare', a documentary about cocaleros, coca growers; in 1993, 'Tierra de Avellaneda', about "the disappearance" of the Argentine dictatorship. 'Repubblica Nostra' (1995) takes place in Italy during Silvio Berlusconi's rise to power; 'FaSinPat-Fabrica sin Patron' (2004) tells the story of a self-managed factory during Argentina's great economic crisis. In 'El Impenetrable' (2012) and in 'Chaco' (2017), he describes his own struggle as a European confronted with the destruction of virgin forests and native tribes. His films have been screened in many international festivals (Venice, Mar del Plata, BAFICI, Cannes, Rotterdam, Turin, Montreal, Doclisboa, Visions du Réel, Cinéma du Réel).

Director's Intention:

In my country, the Central African Republic, tradition states that one mustn't cry for a child who has not been born. The woman is advised to get pregnant again as soon as possible to forget this terrible ordeal. It is a fate that one must accept without protest. To do otherwise would be an insult to God's will. This perception is shared by everyone, including the medical profession. As a young Central African woman, I am angered by the status of women in our society. The only possible role they're allowed to have is that of a housewife. To do this, the film will rarely, if ever, leave Jenifer's side, so that audiences can experience the events alongside her, with the greatest proximity to her emotions.

Makongo Films
Sise quartier Saindou, Postal
box s:c 91, Bangui - The Central
African Republic
+41 787712399 (WhatsApp)
danieleincalcaterra@gmail.com

Co-Producers:
**Kiripifilms (The Democratic
Republic of the Congo)**
Dieudo Hamadi
+33 6 98 07 05 40 (WhatsApp)
dieudohamadi@gmail.com

Estimated Budget (USD): \$941,342
Financing Acquired: \$61,342
**Financers: Makongo Films, Unité,
Kiripifilms**

Unité (France)
Caroline Nataf
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caroline.nataf@unite-films.com

SELFLESS

Genre(s): Fiction

Country(ies): Algeria, France, Qatar

Language(s): Arabic

Logline:

By adopting extreme measures to save the illusory refuge of her marriage, Salima is confronted with the fragility of her long-preserved condition.

Project Synopsis:

Salima (55) learns overnight that her husband has mortgaged their house, without warning, for a hazardous project. Under threat of losing her home, Salima overturns the circumstances that dictate her condition, only to be confronted with the fragility of her situation.



Meriem Mesraoua

Director and Co-Writer

After graduating from Northwestern University, Meriem Mesraoua's work goes to explore issues of identity, power dynamics, and the internalized gaze. In 2020, her short film "À fleur de peau" debuted at the Venice Film Festival. Meriem is currently developing her first feature film. "À fleur de peau" was 15 minutes long, produced in France, Qatar, and Algeria by Les Films de l'Après-Midi (FR), and Alpha Tango (DZ). Selections and awards included La Mostra de Venise 2020, compétition Orizzonti de courts-métrages (WP); Ajyal Film Festival 2020, prix du meilleur court métrage et prix de la meilleure performance; Vues d'Afrique Film Festival 2021, prix du public; MedFilm Festival 2020, compétition internationale; and Passaggi d'Autore: Mediterranean Short Film Festival 2020.



François d'Artemare

Producer

In 1996, François d'Artemare established the Portuguese film company Filmes do Tejo, nowadays running a library of more than 70 titles. He produced with the Paris-based company - Les Films de l'Après-Midi, and in 2001, produced three features by Manoel de Oliveira: 'Christopher Columbus - The Enigma' (Venice 2007), 'Eccentricities of a Blonde-haired Girl' (Berlin 2009), 'The Strange Case of Angelica' (Un Certain Regard, Cannes 2010).

Les Films de l'Après-Midi has produced and co-produced films from all over the world: Bosnia ('Snow' by Aida Begic - Critics's week Grand Prix Award, Cannes 2008 - 'Children of Sarajevo' - Mention of the Jury Un Certain Regard, Cannes 2012), Angola ('The Hro' by Zeze Gamboa - World Cinema Dramatic Jury Prize at Sundance 2005), Portugal ('Montanha' by João Salaviza - Venice 2015; 'Saint George' by Marco Martins - Venice 2016; 'Great Yarmouth' - San Sebastian 2022), Romania ('One Floor Below' by Radu Muntean - Un Certain Regard, Cannes 2015, 'Alice T.' - Locarno 2018), Bangladesh ('Made in Bangladesh' by Rubaiyat Hossain - TIFF 2019), Tunisia ('Noura's Dream' by Hinde Boujemaa - TIFF 2019), France ('I Want to Talk About Duras' by Claire Simon - San Sebastian 2021).



Amel Bedani

Co-Writer

After business studies and experience in the fashion industry, Amel Bedani trained as an assistant director in 2014 and worked closely with Abdellatif Kechiche, whilst involved in the writing and casting of his projects. Amel has since collaborated on several projects as a screenwriter, including Salim Kechiouche's first feature film "L'Enfant du Paradis" which she co-wrote. Amel is also developing and is set to direct her first short film "Warda", produced by Chabname Zariab.

Director's Intention:

This project portrays a woman willing to resort to extreme measures to save the illusory refuge of her marriage. With the threat of its dissolution, Salima (55) finds herself without protection, financial autonomy, or a concrete alternative. In a context where limited support exists outside the family structure, Salima attempts to control circumstances by going further into self-denial—ultimately confronting her with her condition. Salima remains in control of her choices, underlining her own contradictions: a woman whose self-sacrifice works to her own detriment. Built around the themes of sacrifice, transmission, and control, we explore the place of the institution and the power dynamics within the family structure, which sometimes reduces a member to a role or a function; how we internalize, endure, and perpetuate these patterns. Through Salima, we examine a woman's resilience in the face of insidious forms of abuse, both suffered and perpetuated.

Production Company:
Les Films de l'Après-Midi
 20 rue de la République 93200 – Saint-Denis, France
 +33 (0)9 63 67 12 54
 contact@films-am.com

Estimated Budget (USD): \$850,000
Financing Acquired: \$30,000
Financers: Doha Film Institute, Les Films de l'Après-Midi

TANZANITE

Genre(s): Anticipation

Country(ies): Rwanda, South Africa, Kenya, Switzerland

Language(s): English, Kiswahili

Logline:

Kenya 2035, under a super-sun. Intuitive little Adea runs for her life, seeking shelter by the powerful Tanzanite. After years of exile, will she and her allies succeed in healing their land and the spirit of her symbiotic community?

Project Synopsis:

Kenya in the year 2035, a community of women still lives in symbiosis with the neighboring Green Forest. While being initiated, feisty little Adea (8) receives frightening visions of destruction, foreshadowing the coming years. The next morning, Mapesa, an ambitious scout aggressively monetizing land, shows up at the gate and sets the village on fire. Adea narrowly escapes, seeking shelter in a secret cave, where the legendary but lost, mesmerizing tanzanite is resting deep. Her presence unlocks the powers of the gemstone, healing her pain and open wounds. Unfortunately, thrilled by the discovery, Mapesa excavates the rock and steals it, disrupting a delicate balance. A decade later, Nairobi is burning under a super-sun. The whole region is under climate emergency rule and the metropolis is saturated by incoming refugees. As The Mountain of God roars again, eccentric and hardened Machachari (25) will have to overcome her fears and journey through the underbelly of the city amid a general uprising. If she wants to protect her community, she needs to retrieve the tanzanite gemstone and reconnect with her inner knowledge in order to heal and repair not just the land, but also the spirit, and appease all the forces at play.



Kantarama Gahigiri

Director and Writer

Kantarama Gahigiri is a Rwandan artist and filmmaker (writer/director). She is an alumna of Realness African Screenwriter's Residency, La Fabrique (Cannes), Le Moulin d'Andé, and Vienna's MuseumQuartier Residency. As of today, Kantarama pursues her passion immersed in an exploration of identity, sovereignty, and on-screen representation with her most recent projects (selected): "Terra Mater" (Mother Land), which addresses the ties between colonization, capitalism, and climate justice, Berlinale Shorts Competition (2023), IDFA and Red Sea International Film Festival; "Mother Earth", a short film about eco-responsibility, Locarno Film Festival (2022); "Ethereality", a short film about migration and the sense of belonging, Best Short Documentary Award (Poulain d'Or) at FESPACO 2021, features in Quartiers Lointains Season 6: Afrofuturistik, theatrical release in France (2021) and Switzerland (2021-22-23).



Elias Ribeiro

Producer

Elias Ribeiro, a Brazilian producer, has worked internationally since 1999. A resident of South Africa for over 13 years, he launched Urucu in 2011, a production company dedicated to making authentic and thought-provoking films. The company has won awards globally, including Sundance and Locarno. In 2015 Ribeiro co-founded Realness African Screenwriters' Residency, a content incubator that has developed 40 feature projects, and evolved into the Realness Institute, housing three capacity-building programs in the creative industry, as well as three content incubators. The Institute, which has also recently partnered with Netflix, caters to writers, producers, directors, programmers, sales and distribution professionals, episodic content creators, and development executives. Out of seven features, Ribeiro's most successful film, "Inxeba" was shortlisted for an Oscar after winning six SAFTAS and 28 International awards. He is a regional manager at the Southern Africa Locarno Industry Academy and an advisory board member to screenworlds.org and ladima.africa.

Director's Intention:

Originally from Rwanda, I returned to East Africa ten years ago on a professional and personal quest. "Tanzanite" is a continuous exploration permeated with personal experiences, blending science fiction, mythology, cultural heritage, and politics, constructed as an initiatory road journey. At a time when our most important resource, the Earth, our primordial Mother is constantly poisoned, raided, and devastated, Tanzanite is a critique of a capitalistic and neo-colonial society based on inequalities, growth, and the depletion of resources that will lead us inevitably towards a climatic catastrophe. I wanted to address the unsustainability of our social, economic, and environmental models, with a strong and distinct visual identity, futuristic and ancestral, earthly and ethereal, based on a non-deterministic, more eco-conscious vision. Machachari and her circle of initiated souls fight for their identity and integrity, and for restoring the Tanzanite, missing piece for the eternal principle of equilibrium.

Production Company:
Urucu Media
13 Cheviot Place, Green Point,
Cape Town, South Africa, 8051
+27 71 844 5435
er@urucumedia.com

Co-Producer:
Close Up Films, Switzerland

Estimated Budget (USD):
\$2,627,711.82
Financing Acquired: \$190,089.48
Financers: Orange Studio
Development, Post Production
Tax Incentive, Mesures
compensatoires MEDIA /
Creat. Europe, Cinéforum aide
à l'écriture, Succès Passage
Antenne, Pour-cent culturel
Migros.

THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON

Genre(s): Fiction

Country(ies): Egypt, Tunisia, France

Language(s): Arabic

Logline:

Cairo, 2009. Salem, 25, is a Copt working as a pig farmer in the rag-pickers district of Manshyet Nasser. When the swine flu virus appears abroad, psychosis takes hold of Egypt and puts Salem and his community to the test.

Project Synopsis:

Cairo, 2009. Back from the army, Salem, 25, joins his family in Cairo's rag-picking district, home to a majority of Copts and more than 300,000 pigs. There he finds his father Youssef, a silent former swineherd, and his older sister Mira, married to Gaby, a manager of a small garbage recycling business. Salem is entrusted with a pig farm by his brother-in-law. He thrives in his work, makes friends, and falls in love. But when the swine flu appears abroad, psychosis undermines the neighborhood. No cases in Egypt, and yet paranoia is gradually setting in Cairo. Salem can no longer sell his meat. For fear of illness, butcher shops no longer buy his meat. The rag pickers in the neighborhood are stigmatized—because of their proximity to the pigs—and no longer have access to the buildings from which they collect their garbage. And without garbage, there is no more food for the pigs. Salem and his family are caught in the whirlwind of this “pig crisis”. The Mubarak government preventively passes a law to slaughter all the pigs. It is a shock for Salem who finds himself torn between the decision to endorse the government's decision and the actions of resistance.



Rani Massalha
Writer and Director

In 2011, Rani Massalha directed the short film *Elvis Of Nazareth*, winning the Unifrance Jury Prize at Cannes Film Festival 2012. The film was bought by Canal + and BBC Arabic. In 2013, Rani Massalha directed and co-produced his first feature film, *Giraffada* with Saleh Bakri, Laure de Clermont-Tonnerre, and Roschdy Zem. The film premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival before embarking on an international tour, while having an official screening at the United Nations headquarters in New York. It was produced by MACT Productions, distributed in France by Pyramide Distribution in 2014 (25,000 admissions), and recently bought by Netflix. Massalha is currently financing his second feature film, “The Return of the Prodigal Son”, produced by Habib Attia and Marie Legrand.



Habib Attia
Producer

Tunis-born cinema and TV producer Habib Attia focuses on fiction and documentary projects dealing mainly with contemporary sociocultural issues. His ventures as a main producer are worldwide distributed, acclaimed, and awarded in the most prestigious festivals like Cannes, Venice, Toronto, and San Sebastian among others. Two times Oscars nominee with “The Man Who Sold His Skin” in 2021 and “Brotherhood” in 2020, Habib Attia received in 2021—as a recognition to his career—the prestigious rank of Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters of the French Republic.



Marie Legrand
Producer

Marie Legrand is a French producer who supports committed films of all genres and nationalities, helping local stories reach international audiences and thus contributing towards cultural exchange and understanding. She produced films such as “Dégradé” (Jury Prize at Cannes Film Festival Critics' Week 2015) and “Gaza mon amour” (Competition at Venice Orizzonti 2020) by Tarzan and Arab Nasser; “Sibel” by Cagla Zencirci and Guillaume Giovanetti (3 Awards at Locarno 2018 including FIPRESCI); and “Our Lady of the Nile” by Atiq Rahimi (Crystal Bear at Berlinale 2020). With a strong emphasis placed on the status of women and female-driven stories, Marie is currently producing, among others, two first feature films by emerging female directors: “Mermaid Avenue” by Sharon Hakim, a queer fantasy film about a young woman pregnant with a mermaid baby in an Egyptian family in New York, and “Haven of Hope” by Seemab Gul, a social-realist film about the struggle of Pakistani women marginalized by patriarchal society.

Director's Intention:

The pigs of Egypt were “sacrificed” under political pressure and a media hysterical coverage organized by the Muslim Brothers, crystallizing the structural violence of Egyptian social relations between communities. Isn't it written in the Koran that every animal is a creature of God? I don't intend to treat my story like a documentary that will relate the facts of the “pig crisis”, but rather to tell the story of a character within a Coptic family, in order to reveal its internal dynamics. I intend to make an intimate thriller, from Salem's unique perspective, following his obsessive need to make the right choices. In his neighborhood, and in the Middle East in general, there is little room for the individual. Personal dynamics are always part of the group. In my story, Salem will emancipate himself from his family, make his own choices, and regain his individuality.

Production Company:
Cinétéléfilms
23, rue Andalousie, Borj
Baccouche, Ariana, Tunisia
Habib Attia
+21623449001
mh.attia@cinetelefilms.net

Co-Producer:
Les Films du Tambour
102, Quai Louis Blériot 75016
Paris, France
Marie Legrand
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Estimated Budget (USD):
\$2,158,650
Financing Acquired: \$577,950
Financers: Cinétéléfilms (Tunisia),
Les Films du Tambour (France)
own participations, CNC France -
Aide aux cinémas du Monde, BAC
Films, MAD Solutions, Red Sea
Fund (Saudi Arabia)

THE STRANGER

Genre(s): Drama

Country(ies): Syria, France

Language(s): French, Arabic

Logline:

After fleeing Syria, Selma Nassar, 33 years old, arrives in Bordeaux, France, where she struggles to obtain the right to asylum and to bring her son Rami. Her encounter and love story with Jérôme, a French lawyer, may change everything.

Project Synopsis:

Selma Nassar, 33 years old, lives in Damascus under the bombings. She teaches French and takes care of her son Rami alone since the disappearance of her husband, an opponent arrested by the regime. Selma makes the painful decision to separate from Rami and travel alone to France to seek asylum. She then hopes to bring her son to France through the family reunification process and start a new life. After the dangerous journey to France, Selma arrives in Bordeaux. In this city, she faces great loneliness and fights hard to earn a living at all costs, and to bring her son back to her as soon as possible. Selma meets Jérôme, a divorced French lawyer and father of two children in his forties. Jérôme will accompany Selma in her administrative fight to obtain political asylum. From this encounter, a strong love will be born, which will push Selma to question her previous life and will allow her to glimpse a happiness that she thought was forbidden to her. Just as Selma is feeling alive again, and the arrival of her son is imminent, an event occurs that shakes up her life again and confronts her with a difficult choice.



Gaya Jiji

Director

Born in Damascus, Syria, in 1979, Gaya Jiji is a Syrian filmmaker living and working in Paris. She received a Master's Degree in Audiovisual and Film Studies at Paris VIII University. She directed three short films: "The Haunted House" (15 mn, 2003); "The Father... too" (15 mn, 2009); and "Morning, Noon, Evening... and Morning" (19 mn, 2011), selected in many festivals worldwide. In 2016, she received the Women in Motion Award from the Kering Foundation at the Cannes Film Festival. Her first feature, "My Favorite Fabric" (96 min, 2018), produced by Gloria Films, premiered at the 2018 Cannes Film Festival (Selection Un Certain Regard). She is now working on her second feature, "The Stranger", also produced by Gloria Films.



Laurent Lavolé

Producer

Laurent Lavolé is a French producer who founded Gloria Films in 1994. His productions involve French and international directors, fiction and documentary films for cinema and TV. He has also sat or worked in numerous commissions, institutions and juries, notably as a consultant for the Dubai Film Connection, and as artistic director for the French Film Lab Emergence. This year, Gloria Films released "Seven Winters in Tehran" by Steffi Niedertzoll, which won the "Peace Film Prize" and the "Compass Perspectives Award" at the 2023 Berlin Film Festival, as well as the "F:ACT AWARD" at the 2023 CPH:DOX. The documentary was a box-office success, selling over 50,000 tickets. "Burning Days", a feature film by Emin Alper, was presented in the Official Selection (Un Certain Regard) at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival, distributed in France by Memento, and released in April 2023, attracting more than 140,000 spectators.

Director's Intention:

What I want to show in this film is the stories behind the faces we see on the news. Because when asylum seekers arrive in their land of exile, most of them realize that another "Odyssey" begins. They still have to fight to build a new life; to fight not just to be a number or an administrative file; to fight not to be invisible, without a past, without a future and without landmarks; to reconnect with love and maybe with happiness which seems to us at times to be a word that can only belong to the past. In the midst of the first waves of Syrian migration, we began to see many women, alone, leaving their country. "The Stranger" tells the story of one of them.

Production Company:
Gloria Films Production
65 rue Montmartre 75002 Paris
+33 1 42 24 42 11
mel@gloriafilms.fr

Estimated Budget (USD): \$3,187,008
Financing Acquired: \$798,007
Financers: Gloria Films Production (own investment, CNC support fund, Tax Credit), CNC, Procirep/Angoa, Region Aquitaine, Europe Creative Media

THE TREASURE

Genre(s): Fiction

Country(ies): Morocco

Language(s): Moroccan Arabic, French

Logline:

Casablanca. Janine, a poor French woman born in Morocco, and Mohammed, the concierge of her building, are trying to find a treasure hidden in the Atlas Mountains.

Project Synopsis:

Casablanca, in the present time.

Accompanied by Mohamed, her building janitor, Janine, a French woman born in Morocco who has come upon hard times, embarks on a search for a treasure hidden long ago at the foot of the Atlas Mountains. This journey, both spiritual and initiatory, leads them from one Saint's mausoleum to the next. Along the way, each protagonist will try to win over the other, to find out his or her true intentions. However, their relationship will take a turn for the worse and grow increasingly ambiguous. The French woman will soon lose her bearings and replicate a few of the gestures that epitomized French colonialism. For his part, Mohamed will show himself both naïve and a schemer: accompanying Janine on this adventure will revive memories of his father, a soldier who died in Indochina for the French army, whom he'll seek to avenge. In the course of the film, the two main characters will enter a rather opaque magical reality that is treated without folklorism—a reality which is that of a people forgotten by all, and which will follow them to the very end of their obsession with the treasure.



Abdellah Taïa
Writer and Director

Abdellah Taïa was born in Rabat, Morocco, in 1973. "Salvation Army", his first movie as a director, is adapted from his eponymous novel. The film was selected for the Venice Film Festival 2013, TIFF 2013, New Directors 2014, Rotterdam Film Festival 2014, Istanbul Film Festival 2014, and won many international prizes, including The Grand Prix in Angers Film Festival 2014, Best First Feature in Durban Film Festival, Grand Prix in Sevilla Film Festival 2015 and Sundance Global Filmmaker Award 2016. He is the author of nine novels written in French and translated into many languages (in Europe and USA), including "Salvation Army" (2006), "An Arab Melancholia" (2008), "Infidels" (2012), "Celui qui est digne d'être aimé" (2017), "La vie lente" (2019), and "Vivre à ta lumière" (2022). His novel "Le jour du Roi" was awarded the prestigious French Prix de Flore in 2010.



Ilham Raouf
Producer

After completing her studies in English Literature and Linguistics at Hassan II University in Casablanca, Ilham Raouf started working in Moroccan production companies as a production coordinator. She worked on "Game of Thrones", "Homeland", "Bureau des Légendes", "Paris" by Cedric Klapisch; "Of Gods And Men" by Xavier Beauvois; and "Queen of the Desert" by Werner Herzog. In 2012, Ilham Raouf created Abel Aflam Company with Jean-David Lefebvre. She accompanies fiction and documentary directors in their creative process. As a producer, she develops documentaries that reflect the social, political, and cultural situation in Morocco like "Mothers" by Myriam Bakir; and "The Unbeloved" by Amina Harar and Mark Lautal.



Jean-David Lefebvre
Producer

Jean-David began his career in cinema with Claude Faraldo on "Bof... Anatomie d'un livreur". He worked as an AD for artistic figures like Bernardo Bertolucci, Marguerite Duras, Daniel Schmid, Michel Andrieu, and William Klein. He directed more than 250 commercials. In 2002 Jean-David moved to Morocco as executive producer on films like "Paris" by Cédric Klapisch; "A View Of Love" by Nicole Garcia; "Free Men" by Ismail Ferroukhi; "Journey to Mecca" by Bruce Neibaur; and "Of Gods And Men" by Xavier Beauvois. Jean-David also co-produced "Française" by Souad Elbouhati. He founded Abel Aflam in 2012 to produce works of his own choice.

Director's Intention:

I want to show, today, a French woman competing with poor Moroccans in their survival strategies, and thus tackle the issue of French colonialism in Morocco. "The Treasure" will be filmed in the mausoleums of popular Saints where my mother often took me. There, she found peace, solutions to her problems, and the chance to meet the Baraka. For me, it was the heart of Moroccan reality. A combination of the real and the magical, the spiritual and the sexual, the joyous and the tragic, the visible and the invisible. Cinema is present in these places. I've seen it there, I've found it there. Cinema, too, deals with the invisible, so present in our lives and in our hearts. "The Treasure" will be inspired by the most vivid and precise memories I have of these places. "The Treasure" is a political film based on my life and the life around me.

Production Company:
Abel Aflam
61 Avenue Hassan II, 20130 Casablanca,
Morocco
+212 5 22 27 64 42 / +212 6 61 46 06 80
contact@abelaflam.com

Estimated Budget (USD): \$1,884,170.60
Financing Acquired: \$75,366.82
Financers: Abel Aflam

THREE DAYS 1/3

Genre(s): Drama

Country(ies): Lebanon, Palestine, USA, Belgium

Language(s): Arabic

Logline:

Jawaher is a Bedouin nurse in rural Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. As she plans to escape with Sari, her forbidden love, a tribal feud breaks out. The community's sheikhs decide to sacrifice two single girls: Jawaher and her sister.

Project Synopsis:

Jawaher, a Bedouin nurse, lives in a small village in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, where the mysterious cursed mountain rises. Just when she is about to escape with her colleague Sari, her forbidden lover, to get married, a tribal conflict breaks out. Jassim, a cousin of Jawaher's, has killed a man from another tribe. The pomegranate tree at the side of the house whistles. To cool down the blood in this feud, the community's sheikhs decide to sacrifice two single girls who must be sent away to the victim's family. Jawaher and her sister Hind are chosen. The two sisters have no choice but to accept their fate. Injustice will set ablaze Jawaher's heart and determination.



Rakan Mayasi

Director

Rakan Mayasi is an independent filmmaker from Palestine, born in Germany and currently based in Belgium. He studied Cinema, Theater and Psychology in Lebanon and then received film training with Abbas Kiarostami in South Korea at the Asian Film Academy. He has written, directed and produced several short films. His previous film "Roubama" was an official selection at the Locarno Film Festival in 2012. His short film "Bonboné" tackles the phenomenon of Palestinian sperm smuggling from Israeli jails and has world premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2017—it is the recipient of 29 Best Short Awards at international film festivals. "Trumpets in the Sky" is a short exploring cinema as a contemplative medium of visual poetry, metaphor and mythology. Rakan's newest short film is a political fantasy-thriller entitled "The Key", centering around the Palestinian right of return in a twisted way.



Vincent Metzinger

Producer

Vincent Metzinger began his career in 2012 at Canal+ then France Télévisions in Paris. Between 2016 and 2019, he was a producer at Savage Film in Brussels and created Naoko Films with Beata Saboova in 2020. The company produces both fiction and documentaries, such as "The Hill" by Denis Gheebrant and Lina Tsimova, which premiered in the ACID selection of Cannes Film Festival 2022. He studied law in France and the US, and holds a Master's Degree from the Sorbonne Law School. He is an alumni of Eurodoc 2018, Emerging Producers 2020 and Rotterdam Lab 2022.



Juliette Hourcourigaray

Producer

Production manager currently based in Brussels, Juliette Hourcourigaray has a dual masters in philosophy and cinematography and works on producing independent films. She is interested in creative documentaries which rubs shoulders with fiction -or vice versa, and making occasional forays into hybrid formats and innovative drama. Alongside her regular collaboration with the Brussels-based company Twenty Nine Studio & Production, that produces documentaries and artists' films, Juliette is producing Rakan Mayasi's first feature film "Three days 1/3", now in development.

Director's Intention:

In "Trumpets in the Sky" I discovered the tribal presence in the Bekaa Valley. For this first feature film, I want to continue exploring the region, focusing on what I consider to be the heart of this landscape, where marginalized groups live, often underrepresented in cinema. In the rural patriarchal system, women have practically no say. And in a tribal revenge situation, they are often treated as objects to "cool the blood down." I wonder how a woman could influence her fate in this situation. Jawaher, a resident who lives and works in the Bekaa Valley, is our reference and guide. She brings a subtle authenticity to the story and strengthens the film's tone. In a minimalistic cinematic language, I want to explore the challenge of integrating fiction into reality, and the lightweight production techniques that ensue, pushing creativity to their limits to create more with less.

Production Company:
Naoko Films Etc.
Rue de Flandre 121
1000 Bruxelles
juliette.hourcourigaray@gmail.com
/ vincent@naokofilms.be

Co-Producer:
Lux Motus Tempus
United States

Estimated Budget (USD): \$396,543
Financing Acquired: \$63,447
Financers: Tax Shelter of the Belgium Government, Equity Contribution Financers (in process), Centre du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel de la Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles (Belgian cultural fund), Loterie nationale, Belgian broadcaster, World Cinema Fund, Co-producers

WHEN I CLOSE MY EYES I SEE YOUR EYES

Genre(s): Drama

Country(ies): Egypt

Language(s): Arabic

Logline:

A woman lives with her husband in a cramped Cairo neighborhood. When the husband commits suicide and the woman decides to transport his body to their distant town near the border, she passes through vast areas, mountains, and bumpy roads. Through her journey, she discovers her true self after being able to rely on herself for the first time.

Project Synopsis:

A woman in her forties, introverted and isolated, unable to deal and negotiate the simplest matters of life. She lives with her husband, on whom she has depended in all matters for more than two decades, in a cramped neighborhood on the outskirts of Cairo. The husband works in a workshop manufacturing large advertising banners for consumer goods; a simple person who participates in promoting goods that he does not know. When he disappears and the wife searches for him—relying on herself for the first time—she discovers that he has committed suicide. Suddenly alone, she is responsible for transporting his body to their distant town, close to the international border. Since the trip requires covering vast distances, she resorts to a cold-hearted hearse driver. He agrees to take the risk after she offers to give him everything she owns; her simple jewelry, in exchange for his service. The journey forces them to sail through uncharted territories of life, some of which are forgiving, while others are harsher than what they were accustomed to. They move from the heart of one world to another, between mountains and rugged roads. Through that journey, she learns about herself and her truth, erasing the helplessness that lived inside her after relying on herself without always waiting for others to support her in the past.



Sameh Alaa
Writer and Director

Sameh Alaa is an Egyptian director, producer and screenwriter. His first short film 'Fifteen' premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival 2017 and won several awards in festivals around the world. His last short film 'I Am Afraid to Forget Your Face' became the first Egyptian film to be awarded a 'Palme d'Or' in the Cannes Film Festival Short Film Competition 2020. The film continues its festival run at the San Sebastian Film Festival, Cairo Film Festival, Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival, Palm Springs Film Festival, Moscow International Film Festival and many others. His films have been showcased at the MOMA and also broadcasted on different TV channels, such as Canal +, Arte and Shahid. Sameh is currently developing his debut feature film 'When I Close My Eyes I See Your Eyes'.



Mark Lotfy
Producer

Mark Lotfy is an Egyptian producer and director. He established Fig Leaf Studios in 2005, focusing on the work of emerging filmmakers, quickly rising as one of the most prominent independent production companies in the region. He recently produced "I Am Afraid to Forget Your Face", directed by Sameh Alaa, which won the 'Palme d'Or' at the 2020 Cannes Film Festival, and also produced films that were selected in many prominent film festivals, such as the Berlinale, Sundance, Karlovy Vary, San Sebastian, and BFI among others, including recent films like "Souad" directed by Ayten Amin (Cannes 2020, Berlinale and Tribeca 2021 selection), and "Captains of Zaatari" directed by Ali Elaraby (Sundance 2021 selection). With fellow filmmakers, Mark also established 'Cinedelta', an independent documentary film school that aims to create opportunities for young filmmakers through exchanges with international film experts.

Director's Intention:

Women in our country still suffer from oppression and patriarchy; even their mobility is restricted to the husband's accompaniment or permission, and this matter shackles women's thoughts and makes them live without knowing their true selves and without having tools of expression. Our character is one of those women who only met herself after the death of her husband. She is not a victim but a survivor—someone who discovers her limits and true potential by challenging herself and emerging a winner. I want this story to be an example for young girls in my country and all the patriarchal societies of the world to never be afraid of going on the path of obstacles, as something beautiful will bloom at the end: when they unleash the power they have within.

Production Company:
Fingleaf Studios
17 Hassan Zaghmour St., Miami, Sidi Beshr
Bahri, Montaza 1, Alexandria, Egypt
(+2) 03 5553883
production@fingleafstudios.com

Estimated Budget (USD): \$570,100
Financing Acquired: \$82,500
Financers: Fingleaf Studios (Egypt), Dot On The Map (Cyprus)

ANIMALE
MEN IN THE SUN
MY SEMBA
RED PATH
RISING UP AT NIGHT
YUNAN

RED SEA SOUK WORK- IN-PROGRESS SHOWCASE

ANIMALE

Genre(s): Drama, Horror, Revenge

Country(ies): Algeria, France, Belgium

Language(s): French

Logline:

A revenge horror set in the world of bull racing in Camargue, France. After a woman gets attacked one night, young men start disappearing and news of a rogue bull on the loose terrifies the community.

Project Synopsis:

Camargue, France is infamous for its traditional bullfight, and is where an exhilarating and graceful challenge of agility and respect between man and beast takes place. In this male-dominated environment, 22-year-old Nejma trains hard to fulfill her dream of winning the upcoming annual competition. When Nejma is mauled after a celebration, she starts to notice changes. Meanwhile, news of a rogue violent bull on the loose terrifies the community. Young men are being murdered everywhere, and the beast is nowhere to be seen.



Emma Benestan

Writer and Director

Emma is a Franco-Algerian director born in the South of France, and has always been passionate about bull races. In the Camargue region, bulls are respected and worshiped. Following her critically acclaimed romantic comedy "Fragile", which was screened in over 70 festivals around the world, she is directing her first genre film.



Julie Billy and Naomi Denamur

Producers

June Films is a production company founded by Julie Billy and Naomi Denamur in 2020, following the success of "Gagarine". June is developing Fanny Liatard and Jeremy Trouilh's next two features; Hafsia Herzi's third film; and Clémence Poesy's debut feature adapted from Anna Hope's novel 'Expectation'. June is currently in production for "Animale" by Emma Benestan with Wild Bunch handling French distribution, and Film Constellation selling internationally. June is also editing its first mini-series for HBO Max, "La Mythomane du Bataclan" (working title), directed by Just Philippot and starring Laure Calamy.

Director's Intention:

My relationship with the Camargue region dates back to my teenage years and has followed me through my life as a young adult. "Animale" was inspired by my encounter with Marie, a young bull runner, one of the only women in the field. The Camargue region, which is the birthplace of French westerns, is a secret, magical, yet exacting place. I want to start with a poetic Western in natural surroundings and gradually take the plunge toward a fantasy horror world. As a French woman of Algerian origin, it is very important for me to make a Western starring a young girl of North African origin. "Animale" deals with the revenge on society by a young woman of immigrant origins who wants to access a certain position.

Production Company:
June Films
135 boulevard de Sébastopol,
75002, Paris, France
+331 40 39 00 91
production@junefilms.fr

Co-Producer:
Frakas Productions, Belgium

Estimated Budget (USD):
\$3,962,777.95
Financing Acquired: \$3,851,357
Financers: France 3 Cinéma,
Canal +, Ciné +, CNC, Wild Bunch
Distribution, Film Constellation,
Région Sud, Région Occitanie,
Procirep, ANGOA, CVS,
Cinémage 18, ARTE/COFINOVA
Développement 19, Cinéaxe
Développement 3, O'Brother
Distribution, BETV, RTBF, Centre
Wallonie Bruxelles, Red Sea Fund

MEN IN THE SUN

Genre(s): Crime, Thriller

Country(ies): Palestine, UK, Greece, Netherlands, France, Germany

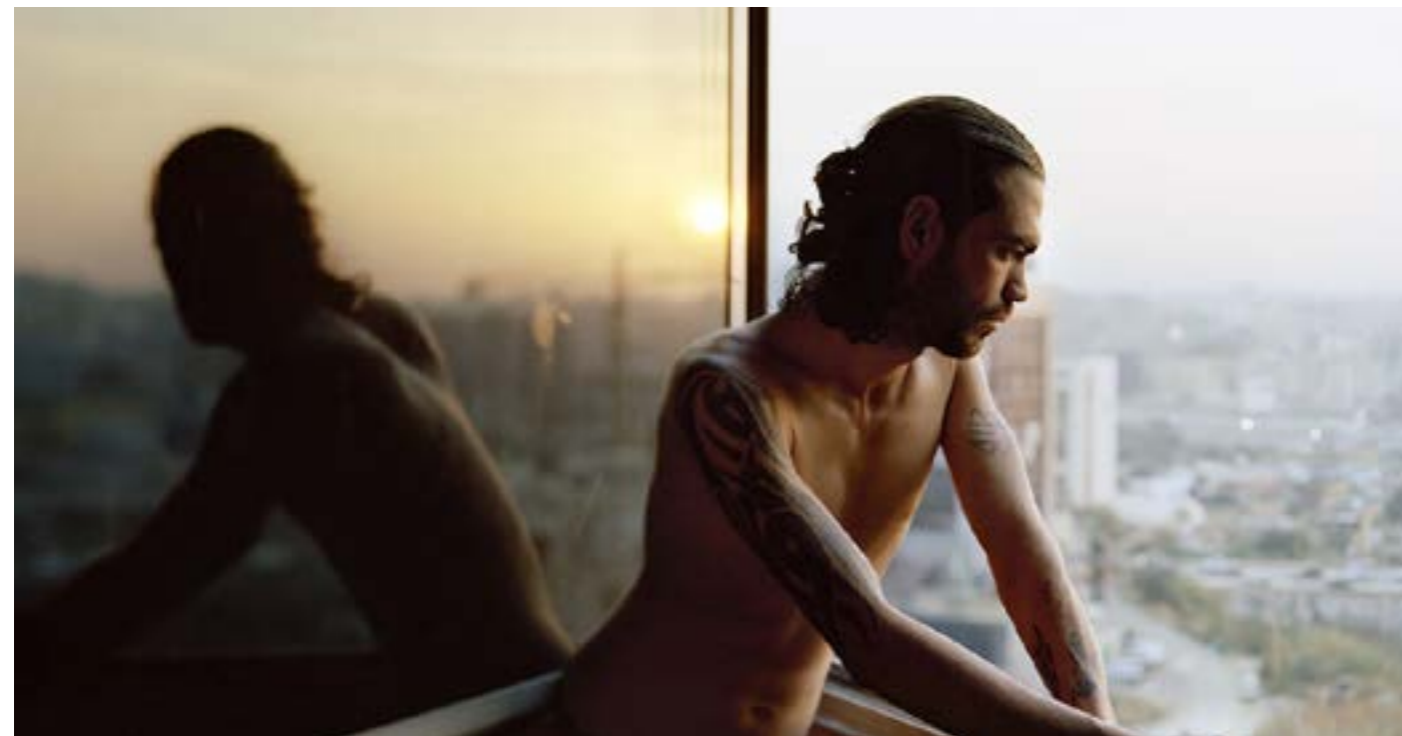
Language(s): Arabic, Greek, English

Logline:

"Men in the Sun" is an immigrant's tale of friendship set against the backdrop of social collapse in southern Europe.

Project Synopsis:

When two Palestinian refugees living on the fringes of society in Athens are ripped off by a would-be smuggler, they set out to seek revenge. In doing so, however, they find themselves embroiled in a hostage situation that forces them to choose between friendship and freedom.



Mahdi Fleifel
Director

Born in Dubai, Mahdi Fleifel lives and works between Denmark, England and Greece. A graduate of the UK's National Film and Television School, he studied fiction directing under Stephen Frears and Pawel Pawlikowski. In 2010, he founded the company Nakba FilmWorks. Fleifel's critically acclaimed debut feature, "A World Not Ours", premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and received over 30 awards, including the Berlinale Peace Prize and the Edinburgh, Yamagata and DOC: NYC Grand Jury Prizes. He was named Best New Nordic Voice at Nordisk Panorama and received the New Talent Award at CPH: DOX in 2013. In 2016, Fleifel won a Silver Bear for "A Man Returned". His follow-up, "A Drowning Man", was selected in the Official Competition at Cannes and was nominated for a BAFTA. His last film, "I Signed the Petition", won Best Documentary Short at IDFA and was nominated for the 2018 European Film Awards.



Jason McColgan
Writer

Jason studied film at the Welsh International Film School before going on to work in film and television for over 17 years, primarily producing commercials, promos, and branded content. In addition, he has written and directed a number of short films and recently co-wrote the BIFA-nominated feature film, "Kindred", starring Tamara Lawrence, Jack Lowden, and Fiona Shaw.



Fyzal Boulifa
Writer

Fyzal Boulifa is a British filmmaker of Moroccan descent. His first feature film, "Lynn + Lucy", released in 2020, won a collection of prizes at several international festivals. Fyzal was also nominated for a Critics' Circle Film Award in 2021 for his directorial work on the feature. Fyzal is the writer and director of several short films including "Burn My Body", and "Whore", winner of Best UK Short at the London East End Film Festival and Grand Prix du Jury at Angers Premiers Plans 2010, and the BAFTA-nominated "The Curse", winner of Illy Prize at Cannes Film Festival 2012. His latest short film "Rate Me" was the winner of the Cannes Illy Prize 2015. Boulifa was also named one of Screen's Stars of Tomorrow.



Geoff Arbourne
Producer

Geoff Arbourne is an Emmy award-winning producer and the founder of Inside Out Films. He has cultivated a global community of talented filmmakers with operations spanning the U.K. and South Africa. Hailing from Devon, England, Geoff's journey took him from academia to the world of cinema when he abandoned a PhD in 2012 to create his first short film. Since then, Inside Out Films has worked in cinema and television, thriving on the foundation of good fortune and strong working relationships. Geoff's portfolio includes notable productions like "London Recruits," "Forever Pure," and "African Apocalypse," all of which have graced major film festivals worldwide, including Sundance, Toronto, and Cannes, earning numerous awards and nominations. In his collaborations with directors like Maya Zinshtein, Rob Lemkin, Gordon Main, Mahdi Fleifel, Brett Wallace, Ali Al-Arian, and David Riker, Geoff pursues films that challenge conventional perspectives, bringing fresh ideas and voices to the forefront. Controversial yet always thought-provoking, his films are a testament to their unwavering commitment. Geoff Arbourne's passion for celebrating international stories and independent voices is evident in his continued collaborations with seasoned artists and emerging talents. As an affiliate of PACT, EAVE, and BECTU in the U.K., Geoff remains a dedicated champion of the global film industry.

Director's Intention:

The condition of exile, and how to portray it on screen, is my main concern with "Men in the Sun". The feeling of exile is that of solitude. It's transcendental in its form, and only an exile really knows this feeling, though they rarely have the ability to describe it.

With "Men in the Sun", I want to examine emotional isolation in a world where war, peace, and God have become abstract notions. The characters in my story are living at the end of the world. The film will convey the feeling of alienation through its use of geography; the feeling of being out of place, not just in the city of Athens, but in the world itself.

I would like to think that, although my characters appear to face an eternity of hopelessness, there is a sense of humor about it all; a lighter tone to life. Without this, how could they survive? I want "Men in the Sun" to leave you with a feeling that hope exists, even in the most hopeless circumstances.

Production Company:
Inside Out Films
13 Southdown Close, Beer, Devon Ex123AN
+447432156147
geoff@insideoutfilms.uk

Nakba Filmworks, UK

Co-Producers:
Maria Drandaki
Homemade Films, Greece

Maarten van der Ven and Layla Meijman
Studio Ruba, Netherlands

François Morisset
Salaud Morisset SASU, France

François Morisset
Salaud Morisset Deutschland GmbH, Germany

Estimated Budget (USD): \$1,059,699
Financing Acquired: \$970,717
Financers: ARTE / ZDF, NFF+HBF, Greek Film Centre, Metafora Productions, Red Sea Fund, MBC Award, Doha Film Institute

MY SEMBA

Genre(s): Drama
Country(ies): Angola
Language(s): Portuguese

Logline:

"It's ironic, they call us black market. Us, 70% of the workforce."

Project Synopsis:

X and his siblings, Lelé and Maria, come of age holding onto each other while facing slavery wages and undignified working conditions, as the working class in an African metropolis. Maria holds on to her faith and family values; Lelé fights fire with fire against the injustices of the metropolis; and X, the poet, tries to make sense of it all, painting the city with words. When their father figure's life is at risk, they will have to face their deepest fears to save him. "My Semba" is Salvaterra's debut feature film and is an ode to music, poetry, and cinema. This film establishes Geração 80 as one of the leading art-house production companies in Africa.



Hugo Salvaterra
Director

Hugo Salvaterra, writer, photographer, musician and DJ is a multi-disciplinary artist who has been concentrating these skills into screenwriting and directing for more than ten years. His dedication to audio-visual storytelling spawns to the most varied formats; experimental, documentary, music video, short film, and advertising, while storytelling remains at the epicenter of his craft. He holds a Master's Degree in Fine Arts (NYFA - N.Y and L.A - 2018) and is the recipient of the prestigious Fulbright Scholarship in 2015.



Jorge Cohen
Producer

Jorge was born and raised in Luanda, the capital city of Angola. He is the co-founder of Geração 80, an audiovisual production studio with the aim to create links, connect generations, and produce local films for the past 13 years. Today, the motivation is still to see Angola on the screen, and collectively make cinema. Cohen understands the role of a producer as the person to reinvent paradigms and create a sustainable form of living and productive culture in Angola. He produced the most important films coming out of Geração 80, such as "Our Lady of the Chinese Shop" (2022), "Air Conditioner" (2020), "Independência" (2015), and recently, a 52-episode TV series for M-Net. Jorge holds an MA in Global Creative and Cultural Industries from SOAS, University of London (2018), and an MA degree in Business from the Catholic University of Lisbon School of Business and Economics (2009).

Director's Intention:

This is a film about redemption and salvation through the lens of art, lyricism and music creating a meta-medley cinematic blast. "My Semba" is a consequence and distillation of both my life's experience as a filmmaker and an African. The kaleidoscopic journey of X, the discovering poet, whose pen forces us to hear and see Angola and humanity. Maria Madalena's quiet determination and unshaken faith amidst insurmountable odds that I see in my own African mother. And Lelé, like many of us, tries to fight and succeed with the courage of his own ideas, with empathy for others even though he has nothing in a war that has already been lost in a society and place where dreams and aspirations seem forbidden. I consider myself to be an Artist which is a social and cultural project: we have been neglected for the color of our skin and our stolen past but we have a certain dignity, swagger, and faith that deserve to be seen and recognized. This film is my most formidable attempt to harness the aforementioned merits.

Production Company:
Geração 80
+244 922 531 912
cinema@geracao-80.com

Estimated Budget (USD): \$415,000
Financing Acquired: \$300,000
Financers: Geração 80

RED PATH

Genre(s): Drama

Country(ies): Tunisia, France, Belgium, Poland

Language(s): Tunisian Arabic

Logline:

"Red Path" is a dreamlike journey into the wounded psyche of a young shepherd, Achraf, and his ability to overcome the traumatic death of his cousin.

Project Synopsis:

While grazing their flock in the mountains, two teenagers were attacked by Jihadists. Accused of being an army informer, 16-year-old Nizar is beheaded, and 14-year-old Achraf is ordered to carry his cousin's severed head as a gruesome message to the family. Achraf, haunted by visions, will carry his terrible burden through a painful initiatory journey during which he will need to summon all the tools of imagination and childhood in an attempt to survive.



Lotfi Achour
Director

A theater and film director, Lotfi Achour has directed more than 25 theatrical creations, including "Macbeth", created for the World Shakespeare Festival for the London Olympics and produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company. As a filmmaker, he has directed six short films that have been selected for over 250 festivals and won over 80 awards worldwide, including "Law of the Lamb", selected for the Official Competition at the 2016 Cannes Film Festival, and "Blind Spot", named Best Short Film at the 2022 Cairo Film Festival and the 2022 FIPADOC, as well as Best Documentary at the 2022 Tampere Film Festival and the 2023 FESPACO, and broadcasted on ARTE. He directed "Burning Hope", a feature film selected for the Official Competition at the JCC 2016; New York; Beirut; Cinemed; Durban; Lausanne; Geneva; and Paris, winning a dozen awards.



Sebastien Hussenot
Producer

Sébastien founded La Luna Productions in 1994 and focused at the beginning on the production of short films, pursuing his goal of seeking new talents. Over the years, he produced more than 100 films that were screened worldwide, winning over 600 awards, with an Oscar nomination in 2009 for the fiction short film "Manon On the Asphalt", directed by Elizabeth Marre and Olivier Pont. Recently, "Tsutsue", directed by Amartei Armar, a co-production with AKA Entertainment (Ghana), was in the Cannes Official Competition in 2022, and "America", directed by Giacomo Abbruzzese, was nominated at the French Academy César Award 2022.



Natacha de Pontchara
Writer

Natacha wrote seven film scripts, four of which were shot in Tunisia and awarded many times; two mini-series; and the co-author of 180 episodes for a broadcasted TV show. She also wrote about twenty plays since 1993. Her texts have been translated and performed in several countries and in many languages (German, English, Spanish, Italian, Arabic, Lithuanian, Russian...) and published by Editions Les Impressions Nouvelles, Editions Comp'act, and Editions Quartett. Winner of several awards, Natacha has received writing grants from the Ministry of Culture, the Centre National du Livre, the Beaumarchais Foundation, and the Centre National du Cinéma. She is a member of the collective Ecrivains Auteurs Associés (EAT), promoting contemporary authors.



Anissa Daoud
Producer

Anissa produces various projects for A.P.A, always with a strong political stance. She produced the feature film "Burning Hope" by Lotfi Achour, and his multiple award-winning short films "Father", selected in over 90 festivals; and "Law of the Lamb", selected in over 80 festivals including the Official Selection of the 2016 Cannes Film Festival. She also produced "The Rest is the Work of Man" by Doria Achour, an Official Selection at the Venice Film Festival. She is currently developing a documentary feature film and two fiction feature films, in addition to several short movies.

Director's Intention:

"Red Path" tells the story of how childhood, faced with extreme violence, also has the kind of magical power to transcend that violence by using the psychic and dream tools at its disposal. Although marked by a bloody starting point, the film never indulges in it and only focuses on it to get to the heart of what concerns me: observing the mutations of my character. By focusing on this process, the film becomes Achraf's journey of initiation and the story of his emergence from childhood. "Red Path" is, above all, the story of a struggle for survival.

Production Companies:
La Luna Productions
2 rue navoiseau 93100 Montreuil,
France
+33 (0)1 48 07 56 00
sebastien@lunaprod.fr

APA: Artistes Producteurs Associés
13 impasse Snoussi 2026 Sidi Bou Said, Tunisia
+216 23 333 617
daoud.anissa@gmail.com

Co-Producers:
Versus Production, Belgium
Shipsboy, Poland

Estimated Budget (USD): \$1,844,269
Financing Acquired: \$1,806,933
Financers: Eurimages, CNC (Fr), CNCI Ministry of Culture (Tn), Fonds Image de la Francophonie (Fr), Wallonia-Brussels Federation (Belgium), Polish Film Institute (Poland), ANGOA (Fr), Région Ile-de-France (Fr), Nour Films (Fr), Bord Cadre (Switz), Sovereign (UK), Proximus (Bel), Doha Film Institute (Qatar), Red Sea Fund (KSA), Sunnyland ART (MENA), The Arab Fund for Arts and Culture - AFAC (Lebanon), Confédération Suisse (Switz)

RISING UP AT NIGHT

Genre(s): Creative Documentary

Country(ies): Democratic Republic of the Congo, Belgium, Germany, Burkina Faso

Language(s): Lingala

Logline:

Kinshasa and its people are in darkness. Like tireless tightrope walkers, they are searching for light.

Project Synopsis:

Kinshasa, the capital of 17 million people, is plunged into darkness and insecurity, and its people struggle to access light. In a relentless quest, Kudi sells Chinese-made torches on the streets of the city. He mobilizes the people of his neighborhood, Kisenso, to buy the stolen cable in order to restore electricity in time for the end-of-year festivities. At Christmas, Kudi becomes Santa Claus. Flashes of light and hope light up the streets of Kinshasa. At the same time, on Mount Mangengenge, a sacred site overlooking the city, Pastor Gédéon preaches the light of Christ as the way to life and truth. Davido, for his part, is seeking shelter because his home has been flooded by the Congo River. With a community of young men, he kills time by working out and dreaming of a better future. Between hope, disappointment, and religious faith, *Tongo Saa* is a subtle and fragmented portrait of a population that, despite the challenges, is reinventing itself in an environment plagued by violence, colored by the uncertainty of tomorrow, and immersed in the beauty of Kinshasa's nights.



Nelson Makengo

Director

Director, photographer and producer Nelson Makengo lives and works in Kinshasa. Makengo participated in the Berlinale Talents Station in 2020 and WIELS art residency in 2018. He was a jury member at IDFA in 2020, and Visions du Réel and International Documentary Association Awards in 2022. He has collaborated with Aljazeera and Meta. His short film "E'ville" (2018) won the Sharjah Art Foundation Residency Prize at the 2019 Videobrasil Biennale. His latest film, "Up at Night" (2019), winner of the Best Documentary Short Film Award at IDFA 2019 and Poulain de Bronze at Fespaco in 2021, was screened at over 100 festivals worldwide, including True False, Full Frame, and Sundance in the USA. "Up at Night" was nominated in 2020 as one of the 50 best films of the year by the British Film Institute. Nelson Makengo is a Sundance Documentary Film Institute and Doha Film Institute grantee.



Rosa Spaliviero

Producer

Twenty Nine Studio

Since 2017, Twenty Nine Studio & Production has been supporting young filmmakers in their most daring film projects. Rosa Spaliviero chooses to produce films that show an openness to the world with a unique aesthetic device and a strong social or political dimension. In 2021, Rosa Spaliviero was a Sundance grantee and EURODOC participant. Recent filmography includes the feature documentary "Rumba Rules, New Genealogies" by David N. Bernatchez and Sammy Baloji, and the short films "Up At Night" by Nelson Makengo and "Machini" by Tétshim and Frank Mukunday.



Dada Kahindo Siku

Producer

Mutotu Productions

Mutotu Productions was founded in 2011 in Kinshasa by photographer, director and producer Kiripi Katembo Siku, with the aim of supporting filmmakers and artists in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Since Kiripi's death, Mutotu has been run by his collaborator Dada Kahindo, who had been following Mutotu's projects since the beginning, with Dieudo Hamadi's first film "Atalaku" (2013).

Director's Intention:

I enter into the depths of the working-class neighborhood of Kinshasa, into the absurdity of the rubble of endless nights, where young people of my age have stopped dreaming because they have to survive from one day to the next. I look at people characterized by their distrust, even disinterest, in the political promises that have kept us in a state of "waiting" or slavery since the country's independence. I want to tell the story of this unfinished city, embedded in the demographic ferment of the twenty-first century, where the construction of the state and national identity remains a kind of dream, a utopia. What is the beauty in all this? It's about self-enlightenment. Meanwhile, the population is reinventing the question of individual illumination to counter the darkness, the personal and collective shadows.

Production Companies:
Twenty Nine Studio & Production
31 Rue de Romestraat 1060, Brussels,
Belgium
+32 488 24 58 28
film@twentyninestudio.net
Rosa Spaliviero
rosa@twentyninestudio.net

Mutotu Productions
Avenue Sonabata, Barumbu, Kinshasa,
DRC
+ 243 851 287 453
Dada Kahindo Siku
dadakahindo@yahoo.fr
cinema@geracao-80.com

Co-Producers:
Film Five (Germany), Diam Production
(Burkina Faso), Auguste Orts (Belgium),
Magellan Films (Belgium)

Estimated Budget (USD): \$419,190
Financing Acquired: \$399,190
Financers: Bourse Brouillon d'un rêve documentaire SCAM (France), Atelier Dérives (Belgium), The Atlas Workshops, Marrakech International Film Festival, Fonds Image de la Francophonie, Fonds Jeune Création Francophone, IDFA Bertha Fund Europe supported by Creative Europe MEDIA program, Berlinale World Cinema Fund ACP, Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program, Hot Docs - Blue Ice Docs Fund, Film and Audiovisual Center of Wallonia Brussels Federation, RTBF (Télévision belge - Unité Documentaire), Flanders Audiovisual Fund (VAF), The Tax Shelter of the Belgian Federal Government, Doha Film Institute

YUNAN

Genre(s): Drama

Country(ies): Germany, Canada, Italy, Palestine, Jordan

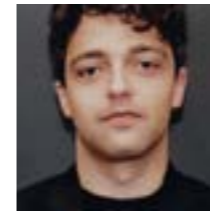
Language(s): Arabic, German, English

Logline:

When an exiled author travels to a remote island to commit suicide, he meets an elderly lady who inspires him to give life a second chance.

Project Synopsis:

Munir, a celebrated author hailing from the Arab world, flees his war-ravaged homeland and lands in Hamburg, where he is plagued by a sense of estrangement from and disenchantment with his surroundings. As he struggles with depression and a pervasive feeling of isolation, his mother's Alzheimer's condition further compounds his anguish, as she fails to recognize him during their phone conversations. Yet, despite her memory lapses, she shares a tantalizing tale of a cursed shepherd, and Munir becomes determined to unravel its enigma and preserve her fading memory. Lost in nostalgia and seeking solace and inspiration, Munir travels to a secluded island in the North Sea, where he encounters Valeska, an elderly woman who runs a hotel. Despite the ostensibly uncomplicated nature of their interactions, Valeska's gentle, maternal demeanor acts as a salve to Munir's wounds, transforming him and guiding him on a path toward redemption. As Munir spends more time on the island, the island's rustic charm and the kindness of its inhabitants also stir poignant memories from Munir's childhood, reigniting his sense of wonder and inspiring him to embrace life anew. Yet, the sense of abandonment that torments him will always prevent him from feeling fully alive.



Ameer Fakher Eldin

Director

Ameer Fakher Eldin is a Syrian writer and director based in Hamburg. He was born in Kyiv, Ukraine, in 1991 to Syrian parents from the occupied Golan Heights. His debut film "The Stranger" premiered at the 78th Venice International Film Festival, where it won the Edipo Re Award, and was selected as Palestine's official entry for Best International Feature Film at the 94th Academy Awards, followed by great acclaim at the 43rd Cairo International Film Festival receiving two awards: The Prize for Best Arab Film in the festival, and the Shadi Abd El Salam Prize for Best Film in the International Critics Week Competition. Additionally, "The Stranger" received nominations for Best Director and won the Best Cinematography award at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards. It is now available for streaming on Netflix, making it accessible to viewers worldwide.



Dorothe Beinemeier

Producer
Red Balloon Film

Red Balloon Film focuses on producing children's and family entertainment for TV and cinema, as well as high-quality arthouse films and drama series for international markets, with an emphasis on emerging talent from the Middle East. This is a passion that has shaped Dorothe's filmography and expertise up until today. Produced titles include Bruno Dumont's "France" starring Lea Seydoux (Cannes 2021, Official Competition) and his most recent film "L'empire" (Camille Cottin, Lyna Khoudri, Fabrice Luchini). Beinemeier's drama series include "Sunshine Eyes" directed by Maria von Heland and awarded the Jury prize at Series Mania in Lilles in 2022, and the acclaimed international vampire youth series "Heirs of the Night" (International Emmy Awards nominee, 2021). Dorothe is the proud producer of Ameer Fakher Eldin's award-winning debut "The Stranger" (winner of ClIFF Best Film, Best Director, and Edipore Award in Venice). The film premiered in 2021's selection of Giornate degli Autori in Venice and was Palestine's Academy Awards 2022 entry. Their next project "Yunan" with an outstanding cast ensemble, Georges Khabbaz, Ali Suleiman, Hanna Schygulla, Sibel Kikelli, and Nidal Al Achkar, just finished shooting. The third film "Nostalgia: A Tale in First Chapters," is in development. Dorothe is a member of Ateliers du Cinéma Européen (ACE 21) and EAVE (2017), both training programs for selected European producers.

Director's Intention:

In the tone of an arthouse drama, "Yunan" will expand on the theme of individual estrangement and deal with the distances that relentlessly open up when one is in exile. Existing between an unforgettable past and an unattainable future, the film is about loneliness and depression, the suffering of those stuck in the depths of their despair. As my second feature, "Yunan" is not just the story of an individual longing for home but also a fable about human fate. I have in mind an unconventional, visually striking film shot between Hamburg, Langeneß Island (Schleswig-Holstein), and a valley somewhere in the Middle East (we believe it could be found in the Middle East). Cinematically, it will essentially show the value of space across time and a courageous, non-conformist hero experiencing an existential crisis that is almost overwhelming his surroundings; a man so possessed by nostalgia that he is forgetting his actual past.

Production Company:
Red Balloon Film GmbH
Behringstrasse16B, 22765
Hamburg
+49 40 500 90 808
hello@redballoon-film.de

Co-Producers:
Microclimat Films (Canada),
Intramovies (Italy), Fresco Films
(Palestine), Tabi360 for TV & Film
Production (Jordan)

Estimated Budget (USD):
\$2,856,465
Financing Acquired: \$2,856,465
Financers: MOIN Film Fund
Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein
(GE), DFFF - German Tax Credit
25% (GE), Red Sea Fund (KSA),
Doha, MFA+ Distribution MG
(GE), Metafora (Qatar), The Royal
Film Commission - Jordan (JO),
Wordsales MG Intramovies, MAD
Sales and Distribution MG (Arab-
speaking countries), Telefilm,
SODEC, Quebec Tax Credits
Distribution, MG - Filmoption
International, Eurimages, MIC
Automatic Reinvestment Support
(ITA), Tax Credit/other automatic
funds (ITA)

THE MOTHER OF ALL LIES
FOUR DAUGHTERS
GOODBYE JULIA
INSHALLAH A BOY
THE BURDENED
OMEN
HOUNDS
HANGING GARDENS
THE CEMETERY OF CINEMA
BACKSTAGE
BEHIND THE MOUNTAINS
MANDOOB

THE RED SEA FUND



Emad Eskandar
Head of Red Sea Fund

NOTE FROM THE HEAD OF THE RED SEA FUND

Welcome to another edition of the Red Sea Fund, a true force to be reckoned with in the realm of Arab and African film financing. It's humbling to be able to say this in our opening statement, with our platform being only three years young. I am now beyond happy to say that, to date, we have backed over 250+ films, showcasing the extraordinary talent blossoming in every corner of our region.

These humbling realizations come hand-in-hand with overwhelming pride as I recall the exceptional Red Sea Fund films that toured the world and reaped awards across the international festival circuit, crowning their Creators' hard work with recognition from Cannes, TIFF, Berlin, and Venice to name a few. This year alone, seven of our funded films have been Chosen to represent their respective countries at the Oscars.

To be quite frank, we find all of this immensely reassuring—we're on the right track, and we must keep going; growing, improving, and empowering more of our cinematic voices.

Our dedicated Fund team and exceptional selection panel have played a crucial role in our success. But most importantly, it's the filmmakers who trusted us with their dreams that made it all possible. So, thank you.

So welcome, again, to the Red Sea Fund, where storytelling, creativity and opportunity converge.

RED SEA Fund FILMS THAT TOURED THE WORLD



A dynamic force in the world of Arab and African film financing, the Red Sea Fund operates across four cycles, encompassing projects in stages of development, production, and post-production. The Fund's dedication to nurturing cinematic creativity has resulted in supporting 250+ films since its first edition in 2021. Beyond its financial contributions, the Fund is also launching a range of initiatives to bolster the film industry. These include a celebration of women in cinema by funding graduation films from the first women's university and the first filmmaking degree in the Kingdom of Saudi. This is in addition to partnerships with other festivals around the world, providing financial awards to exceptional projects.

Below are some of the funded films that made us even prouder, touring the international film festival circuits and reaping awards.

THE MOTHER OF ALL LIES

Director: Asmae El Moudir
Producer: Asmae El Moudir

AWARDS

- Cannes Film Festival: Golden Eye Award and Best Director Award in the Un Certain Regard section
- Durban International Film Festival: Best Documentary Award
- Sydney Film Festival: Best Picture Award
- Toronto International Film Festival: Official Selection
- Academy Awards: Selected by Morocco as its official entry to the Oscars.



FOUR DAUGHTERS

Director: Kaouther Ben Hania
Producers: Habib Attia, Nadim Cheikhrouha, Thanassis Karathanos, Martin Hampel

AWARDS

- Cannes Film Festival: L'Oeil d'or (Golden Eye) Award
- Toronto International Film Festival: Official Selection
- Brussels International Film Festival: Jury Award
- Chicago Film Festival: Best Documentary Award
- Academy Awards: Selected by Tunisia as its official entry to the Oscars



GOODBYE JULIA

Director: Mohamed Kordofani
Producer: Amjad Abu Alala

AWARDS

- Cannes Film Festival: "Freedom Prize" in the Un Certain Regard section
- Chicago Film Festival: Roger Ebert Award for New Directors
- Academy Awards: Selected by Sudan as its official entry to the Oscars



INSHALLAH A BOY

Director: Amjad Al Rasheed
Producers: Aseel Abu Ayyash , Rula Nasser, Yousef Abed Alnabi

AWARDS

- Cannes Film Festival: "Rail d'Or du long métrage" award at the Semaine de la Critique and Gan Foundation Distribution Award
- Toronto International Film Festival: Official Selection
- Arab Film Festival Rotterdam: Jury Award and Best Actress Award
- Academy Awards: Selected by Jordan as its official entry to the Oscars



THE BURDENED

Director: Amr Gamal

Producers: Mohsen Alkhalifi, Amr Gamal

AWARDS

- Berlin International Film Festival: Amnesty International Film Award
- 2nd place Audience Award- Dokumente (Panorama)
- Durban International Film Festival: Best Screenplay
- Taipei Film Festival: Special Jury Prize in Int. New Talent Competition
- Chicago Film Festival: Gold Hugo Award for New Directors
- Academy Awards: Selected by Yemen as its official entry to the Oscars



OMEN

Director: Baloji

Producers: Benoît Roland - Sébastien Onomo

AWARDS

- Cannes Film Festival: New Voice Prize in the Un Certain Regard section
- Durban International Film Festival: Best African Feature Film
- Munich Film Festival: CineRebels Award
- Academy Awards: Selected by Belgium as its official entry to the Oscars



HOUNDS

Director: Kamal Lazraq
Producer: Saïd Hamich

AWARDS

- Cannes Film Festival: Jury Prize Award in the Un Certain Regard section



HANGING GARDENS

Director: Ahmed Yassin Aldaradji
Producers: Huda Al Kadhimi - Margaret Glover - May Odeh

AWARDS

- Malmo Arab Film Festival: Best Film, Best Screenplay and Best Actress
- Venice Film Festival (2022): Official Selection
- Red Sea International Film Festival (2022): Best Feature Film and Best Cinematic Contribution
- Academy Awards: Selected by Jordan as it's official entry to the Oscars



THE CEMETERY OF CINEMA

Director: Thierno Souleymane Diallo
Producers: Maud Martin, Jean-Pierre Lagrange, Marie-Louise Sarr, Alpha Amadou Diouldé Diallo

AWARDS

- Berlin International Film Festival: 3rd place Audience Award- Dokumente (Panorama)



BACKSTAGE

Director: Afef Ben Mahmoud - Khalil Benkirane
Producers: Afef Ben Mahmoud - Khalil Benkirane

AWARDS

- Venice Film Festival: Cinema and Arts Award



BEHIND THE MOUNTAINS

Director: Mohamed Ben Attia

Producers: Dora Bouchoucha, Lina Chaabane Menzli

AWARDS

- Venice Film Festival: Best Film Award



MANDOOB

Director: Ali Kalthami

Producers: Wael Abu Mansour, Abdulrahman Jerash, Chawki Knis

AWARDS

- Toronto International Film Festival: Official Selection
- Zurich Film Festival: Official Selection



THANKS TO OUR TEAMS

Project Market Team



Licia Eminent

Programme Manager
Project Market
& WIP Showcase
Head of Selection
Committee

**Work-in-Progress
Showcase Team**

**360° & Networking
Sessions Team**



Carol Mezher

Manager and Curator
of Red Sea 360° &
Networking Sessions



Zain Zedan

Souk Manager



Holly Daniel

Film Market
Producer



Siza Zayed

Project Market
Manager



Nancy Hamdy

Project Market
Coordinator



Anoo Sadayo

Project Market
Assistant



Wim Vanacker

Head of Selection
Committee,
Consultant



Cendrella Abi Gerges

Work-In-Progress
Manager



Budoor Bahareth

Work-In-Progress
Coordinator



Maria Kouteili

Coordinator of
Red Sea 360° &
Networking Sessions



Tya Kassabli

Assistant of Red Sea
360° & Networking
Sessions



Rmas Alhazmi

Assistant of Red Sea
360° & Networking
Sessions

THANKS TO OUR TEAMS

Souk Exhibition Team

Red Sea Fund Team



Raghad Korayem

Exhibitors Manager & Souk Coordinator



Arwa Altoukhi

Exhibition Sales Executive & Souk Coordinator



Laura Mufti

Sales Assistant



Emad Eskandar

Head of Red Sea Fund



Salman Almusaad

Cycle Manager



Mohammad Justaniah

Submission Manager



Reem Almodian

Submission Manager



Munthir Atuwayrib

Contract Supervisor



Mai Alshaibani

Initiatives Manager



Reham Jambi

Fund Coordinator



Ghaida Alsurayhi

Fund Coordinator

THANKS TO OUR TEAMS

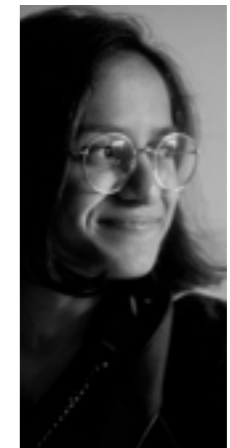
Red Sea Labs Team

TorinoFilmLab Team



Ryan Ashore

Head of Red Sea Labs



Hania Bakhshwain

Red Sea Labs Officer



Mansoura Almansour

Communication Manager



Dur Jamjoum

Red Sea Labs Submission Officer



Diala Gouth

Red Sea Labs Associate



Costanza Fiore

TorinoFilmLab Project Manager



Violeta Bava

Head of Studies



Michel Kammoun

Head of Script Development

1.
Project Market Pitchings
sessions & WIP Showcase

3.
Red Sea 360°

5.
Talent Days

2.
One to one Meetings

4.
Networking Sessions

6.
Exhibition Space

RED SEA SOUK SCHEDULE

1. PROJECT MARKET PITCHING SESSIONS & WIP SHOWCASE

Souk Project Market

Souk Project Market is designed to support film coproduction and completion as well as international distribution of African and Arab films. Souk Project Market is a selection of 14 films in Development/ Production feature films, fiction, animation and documentary by Arab/ African Directors.

The Lodge

The Lodge by the Red Sea Labs is a feature film residency program. Developing projects from Saudi, Arab region and Africa for 10 months. The Lodge took place in Jeddah, Alula and Torino this year with intensive workshops on all aspects of filmmaking including Directing, Editing, Sound, Cinematography, production, and sales with top industry professionals.

Work-in-Progress Showcase

Work-in-Progress Showcase consists of a selection of 6 films in post-production. All projects compete to a specific number of awards granted by a jury. The presentations and screenings of the projects are held during the first 3 days where the awards of the winning projects are announced on the 4th, last day of the program.

1ST DAY - Saturday 02.12.2023

Session	Time + Location	+
LODGE PROJECTS PITCHING SESSION <i>12 PROJECTS</i>	10:00 - 12:30 Souk Cinema	<i>Simultaneous interpretation.</i> Accreditation Access <i>Souk badge only.</i>
SOUK MARKET PROJECTS VIDEOPITCH SESSION <i>14 PROJECTS</i>	14:00 - 17:00 Souk Cinema	<i>Simultaneous interpretation.</i> Accreditation Access <i>Souk badge only.</i>

2ND DAY - Sunday 03.12.2023

Screening	Time + Location	+
WORK IN PROGRESS SCREENING <i>RISING UP AT NIGHT</i>	10:00 - 12:00 Souk Cinema	<i>Simultaneous interpretation.</i> Accreditation Access <i>Souk badge only.</i>
WORK IN PROGRESS SCREENING <i>ANIMALE</i>	13:30 - 14:30 Souk Cinema	<i>Simultaneous interpretation.</i> Accreditation Access <i>Souk badge only.</i>
WORK IN PROGRESS SCREENING <i>MY SEMBA</i>	15:00 - 17:00 Souk Cinema	Accreditation Access <i>Souk badge only.</i>

3RD DAY - Monday 04.12.2023

Screening	Time + Location	+
WORK IN PROGRESS SCREENING <i>YUNAN</i>	10:00 - 11:00 Souk Cinema	Accreditation Access <i>Souk badge only.</i>
WORK IN PROGRESS SCREENING <i>MEN IN THE SUN</i>	11:30 - 12:30 Souk Cinema	Accreditation Access <i>Souk badge only.</i>
WORK IN PROGRESS SCREENING <i>RED PATH</i>	14:00 - 16:15 Souk Cinema	<i>Simultaneous interpretation.</i> Accreditation Access <i>Souk badge only.</i>

4TH DAY - Tuesday 05.12.2023

Ceremony	Time + Location	+
RED SEA SOUK AWARDS CEREMONY	17:00 - 18:30 Souk Forum Room	<i>Simultaneous interpretation.</i>

2. ONE TO ONE MEETINGS

One-on-one meetings between projects talents and the industry professionals attending the Festival. These meetings allow directors and producers of the selected Projects to interact directly with industry decision-makers.

1ST DAY - Sunday

03.12.2023

Meeting	Time + Location	+
One to one Meetings - Souk & Lodge Projects	10:00 - 12:00 Souk Industry Room	<i>(1st floor)</i>
One to one Meetings - Souk, Lodge & WIP Projects	14:00 - 16:00 Souk Industry Room	<i>(1st floor)</i>

2ND DAY - Monday

04.12.2023

Meeting	Time + Location	+
One to one Meetings - Souk, Lodge & WIP Projects	10:00 - 12:00 Souk Industry Room	<i>(1st floor)</i>
One to one Meetings - Souk, Lodge & WIP Projects	14:00 - 16:00 Souk Industry Room	<i>(1st floor)</i>

3RD DAY - Tuesday

05.12.2023

Meeting	Time + Location	+
One to one Meetings - Souk, Lodge & WIP Projects	10:00 - 12:00 Souk Industry Room	<i>(1st floor)</i>
One to one Meetings - Souk, Lodge & WIP Projects	14:00 - 16:00 Souk Industry Room	<i>(1st floor)</i>

3. NETWORKING SESSIONS

As part of the Red Sea Souk's commitment to fostering filmmaking talent, the Networking Sessions provide opportunities for new entrants and emerging filmmakers to connect and network with key players from the film and TV landscape. Tailored to enable connections between Festival/ Souk attendees and professionals, the Networking Sessions gather a large roster of selective regional, international and pivotal industry leaders over 3 sessions, offering a dedicated journey from script to screen. Through informal yet organized speed-meetings in a friendly set-up, producers, distributors, consultants, agents, commissions, funding entities, festival representatives and many more will offer guidance and support, catering to filmmakers' career development.

1ST DAY - Saturday

02.12.2023

Session	Time + Location
NETWORKING SESSION 1: REGIONAL KEY PLAYERS	17:00 - 18:30 Souk Industry Room

2ND DAY - Sunday

03.12.2023

Session	Time + Location
NETWORKING SESSION 2: INTERNATIONAL KEY PLAYERS	17:00 - 18:30 Souk Industry Room

3RD DAY - Monday

04.12.2023

Session	Time + Location
NETWORKING SESSION 3: PIVOTAL ROLES	17:00 - 18:30 Souk Industry Room

4. RED SEA 360°

Red Sea 360° is a diverse and vibrant platform offering pivotal conversations and unparalleled insights into the present and future of the Arab, African and Asian film industries, including their far-reaching impact on the global entertainment landscape. This four-day program of thrilling talks will bring together some of the most influential and thought-provoking voices in the film and TV industry, from the region and internationally.

1ST DAY - Saturday

02.12.2023

Panel

Time + Location

THE WRITER'S JOURNEY: NAVIGATING SCRIPTS FOR FILM, TV & FUTURE STORYTELLING FORMATS (Panel)

10:30 - 11:30 | Souk Forum Room

REDEFINING THE THEATRICAL EXPERIENCE IN THE POST-STREAMING ERA (Panel)

12:00 - 13:00 | Souk Forum Room

WOMEN CHARTING THE COURSE OF FILM & TV: CRAFTING UNCONVENTIONAL NARRATIVES (Panel)

14:00 - 15:00 | Souk Forum Room

2ND DAY - Sunday

03.12.2023

Panel

Time + Location

PEAK TV'S SEASON FINALE: TOO LITTLE OR TOO MANY SERIES? (Panel)

12:00 - 13:00 | Souk Forum Room

IS THE BLOCKCHAIN STILL AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE FILM INDUSTRY? (Panel)

14:00 - 15:00 | Souk Forum Room

3RD DAY - Monday

04.12.2023

Panel

Time + Location

COLLABORATIVE VENTURES: ADAPTING INTERNATIONAL IPS, INVESTING IN LOCAL PRODUCTIONS; CONNECTING LOCAL STORIES TO GLOBAL AUDIENCES (Panel)

10:30 - 11:30 | Souk Forum Room

CINEMATIC CROSSOVERS: EXPLORING THE GLOBAL IMPACT OF HALLYUWOOD, BOLLYWOOD, NOLLYWOOD AND FRENCH CINEMA (Panel)

12:00 - 13:00 | Souk Forum Room

UNLOCKING CO-PRODUCTION OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE ARAB WORLD: SCANNING THE ECOSYSTEM OF FILM COMMISSIONS, FUNDS, LABS AND FILMING LOCATIONS (Panel)

14:00 - 15:00 | Souk Forum Room

4TH DAY - Tuesday

05.12.2023

Panel

Time + Location

ANIMATION & VIDEO GAMES: MORE THAN A GENRE, A WORLD OF ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES (Panel)

10:30 - 11:30 | Souk Forum Room

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: FILMMAKING'S DOOMSDAY OR RENAISSANCE? (Panel)

12:00 - 13:00 | Souk Forum Room

Additional sessions will be published on the website. Visit the digital schedule on the Red Sea 360° page for more updates.

5. TALENT DAYS

Talent Days is a series of meetings, workshops and special events aimed at nurturing a new generation of filmmakers. It is an initiation into the cinema industry for aspiring filmmakers through inspiring talks and individual meetings to help the ideas in their heads take a more tangible form. It is a 2 days program held after the Red Sea Souk 4 days event.

1ST DAY - Wednesday 06.12.2023

Session	Time + Location	+
Talent Days Welcoming Breakfast: A Collaborative Celebration with Neom	10:00 Souk Industry Room	<i>Upon Invitation</i>
In Conversation with: Talent Days Godmother	11:30 Souk Forum Room	<i>All Badges</i>
In Conversation with: Revealing a Casting Director's Secrets	14:00 Souk Forum Room	<i>All Badges</i>
Creative Talk: Filmmaking with a Green Spirit	15:30 Souk Forum Room	<i>All Badges</i>
Creative Talk: Mastering the Craft of Film Marketing	17:00 Souk Forum Room	<i>All Badges</i>

2ND DAY - Thursday 07.12.2023

Session	Time + Location	+
Meet & Match : Filmmakers x Industry Players	9:30 Souk Industry Room	<i>Upon Invitation</i>
The Art of the Pitching Training in Collaboration with Maflam (in arabic)	10:00 Souk Forum Room	<i>All Badges</i>
What is love?...Baby don't hurt me: The Art of Discussing Films	11:30 Souk Forum Room	<i>All Badges</i>
A Film Case Study: Behind the Scenes of Dammi	14:00 Souk Forum Room	<i>All Badges</i>
Creative Talk: Channeling Emotions into Creativity	15:00 Souk Forum Room	<i>All Badges</i>
Panel: Saudi Arabia's Film Opportunities	16:30 Souk Forum Room	<i>All Badges</i>

All of these activities will be translated into arabic.

6. EXHIBITION SPACE

The Exhibition Space will take place from 2 – 5 December, 2023. It will operate every day from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. The area is dedicated to institutions and companies to promote their national cinema, professionals and activities, such as cinema centers, film commissions, post-production facilities, platforms and others. It hosts over 16 countries with a total of 65 exhibitors.

THE
SPACE
IS
OPEN
DURING
THE
4 DAYS
EVENT
FROM
10:00 -
18:00.

**SOUK
EXHIBITOR
HALL &
FESTIVAL
MAPS**

SOUK EXHIBITOR HALL MAP

ORCHID

Exhibitor Hall

- 01 ART- Arab Radio & Television Network
- 02 Invest Saudi
- 03 CineCrew
- 04 VIU
- 05 Manga Productions
- 06 Trend VFX & Postproduction
- 07 New Black
- 08 Arab Cinema Center
- 09 Swish Audio House
- 10 Creative Media Solutions
- 11 Konoz
- 12 New Zealand
- 13 Hecatstudio
- 14 Film AIUla
- 15 British Council
- 16 Qanawat Group
- 17 Lagoonie Film Production
- 18 Cedars Art Production (Sabbah brothers) & Arab Motion
- 19 EQew Equipment & Crew
- 20 Millimeter Productions
- 21 Sadaf Media Productions
- 22 35mm Media Production
- 23 Kind Abdulaziz Center for World Culture - Ithra
- 24 BlackLight Films
- 25 Film Association
- 26 Rays3D
- 27 Yellow Camel Studios
- 28 Myco
- 29 Qomra
- 30 VOX
- 31 NEOM

VIOLET

Exhibitor Hall

- 32 Cinewaves Films
- 33 Maflam
- 40 Red Sea Fund
- 41 African Cultural Agency
- 42 Pavillon France
- 43 VIVID Studios
- 44 Shasha
- 45 Spacatoon
- 46 Content Thailand
- 47 Telfaz 11
- 48 First Poly Production
- 49 Box7
- 50 Türkiye Pavilion
- 51 SPT - Studio Production Training
- 52 American Chamber of Commerce
- 53 D-Port Productions
- 54 SAIP - Saudi Authority for Intellectual Property
- 55 Noir Cinema
- 56 Rowad Media Group
- 57 Kut the Crab
- 58 Rotana Group
- 59 Specter
- 60 MAD Solutions
- 61 Cultural Development Fund
- 62 MBC
- 63 Asharq Documentary
- 64 Asharq Discovery
- 65 The Saudi Film Commission

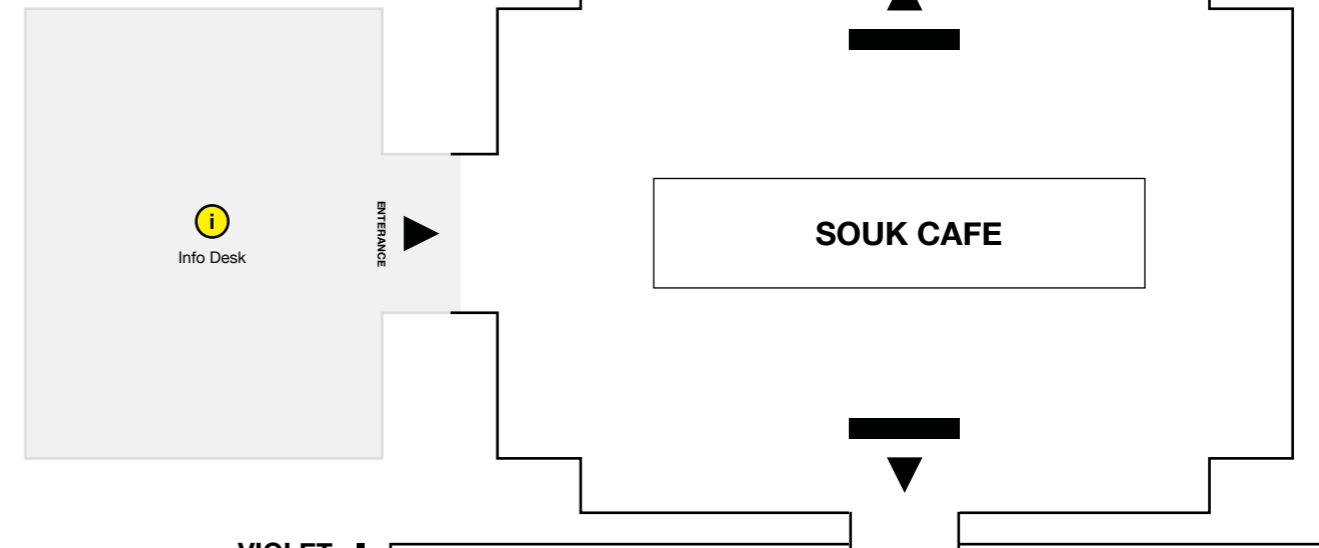
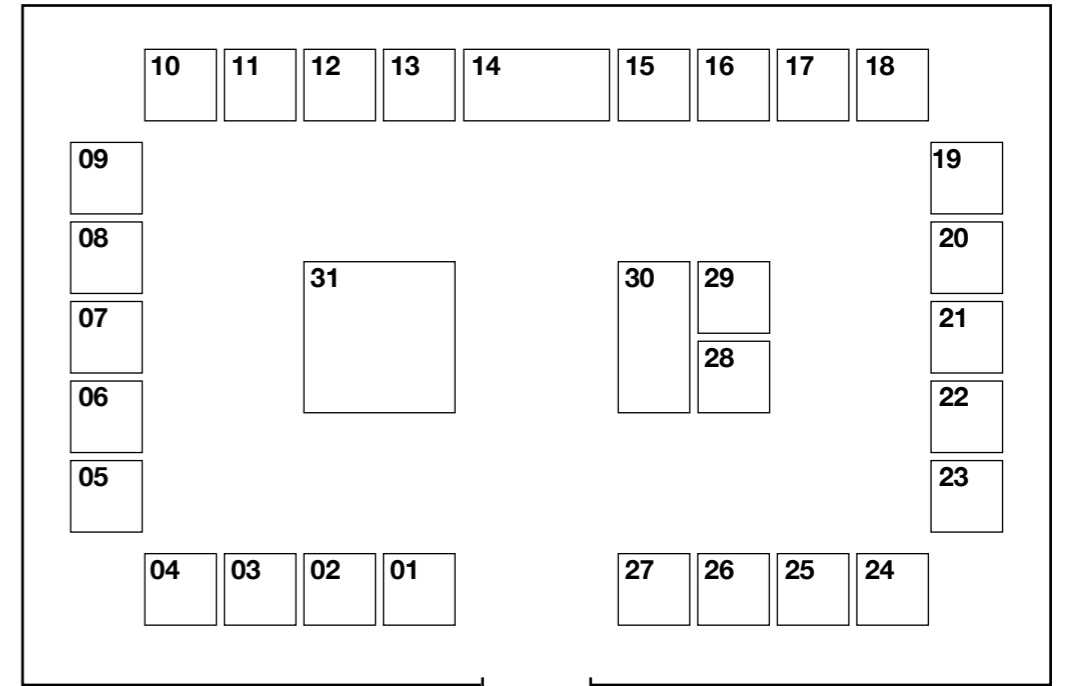
THE MEETING CORNER

- 34 Pianola Studio
- 35 Kulymat
- 36 National Efficiency Compay
- 37 Big Bang Studios
- 38 89.90 Art Production
- 39 Project NXT

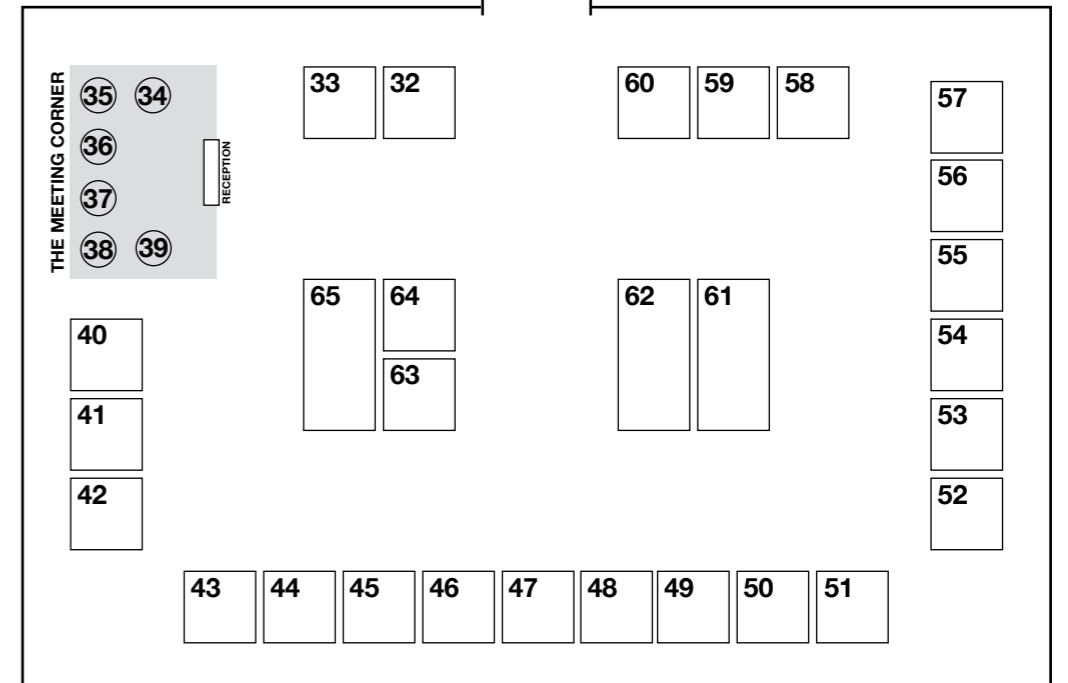


Scan for more info
REDSEAFILMFEST.COM

ORCHID Exhibitor Hall



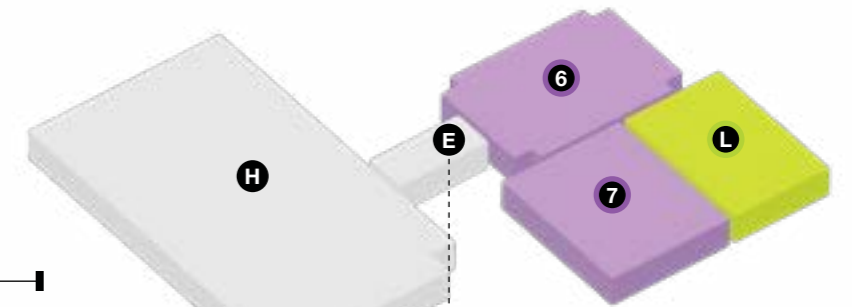
VIOLET Exhibitor Hall



FESTIVAL MAP

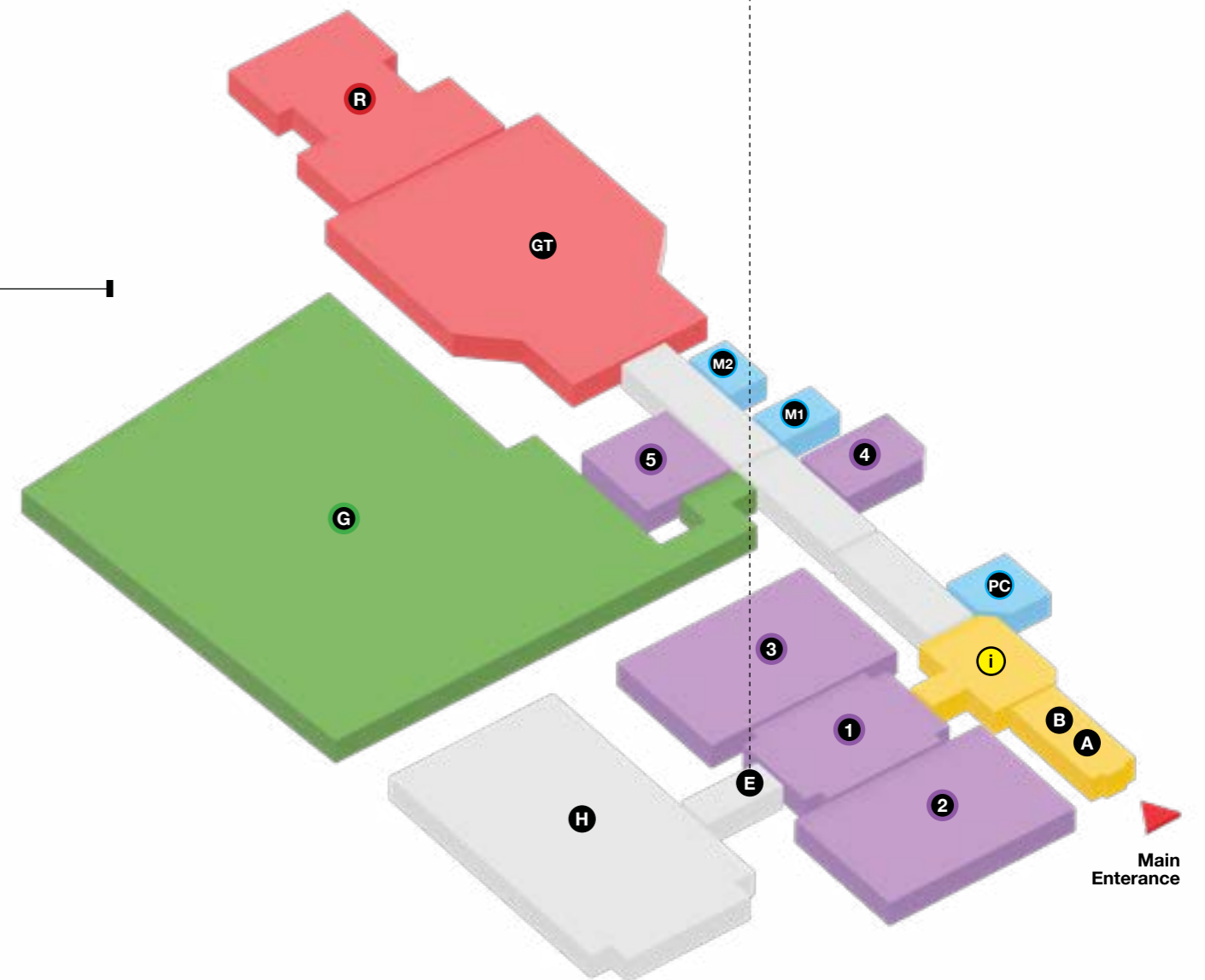
1 - First Floor

- RED SEA LABS**
 - L Red Sea Labs
- RED SEA SOUK**
 - 6 Pre-Function Souk
 - 7 Souk Industry Room



G - Ground Floor

- Main Entrance** (Red triangle icon)
- H** Hotel
- G** Festival Garden
- E** Elevator
- GT** Gala Theater
- R** Red Carpet
- WELCOME ZONE**
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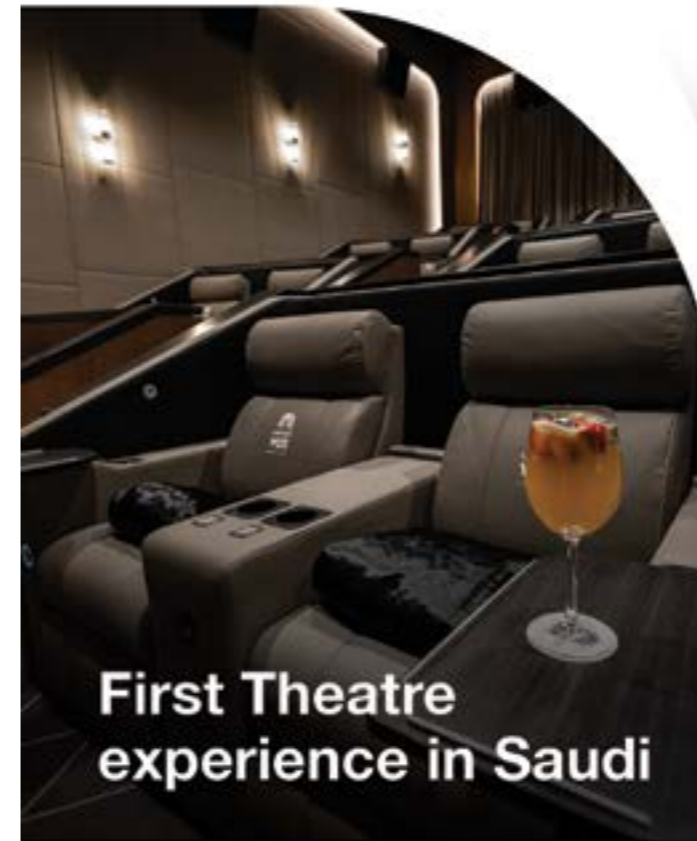
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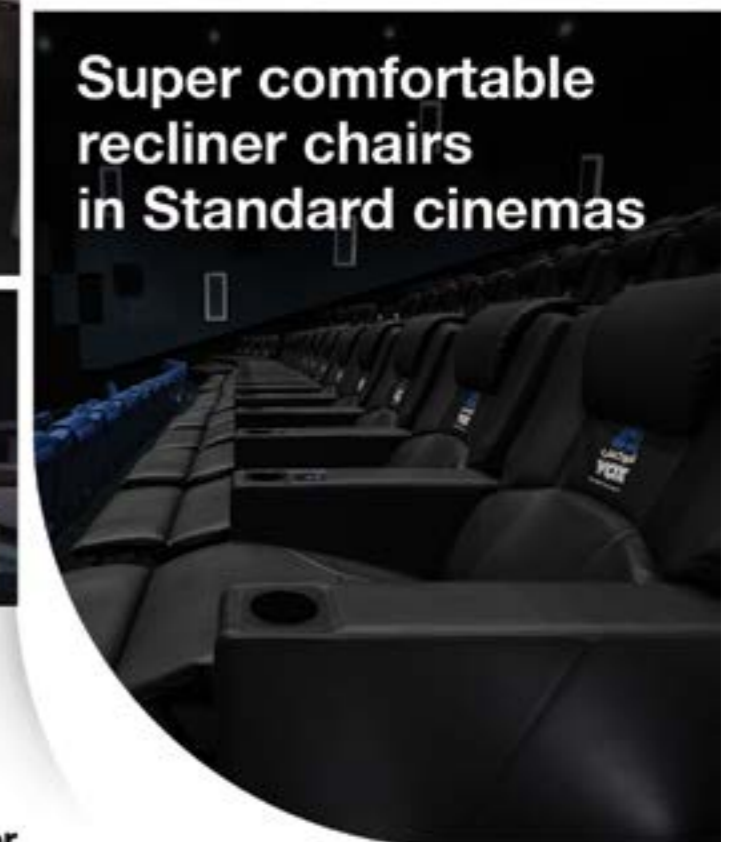
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BY MOHAMED BEN ATTIA



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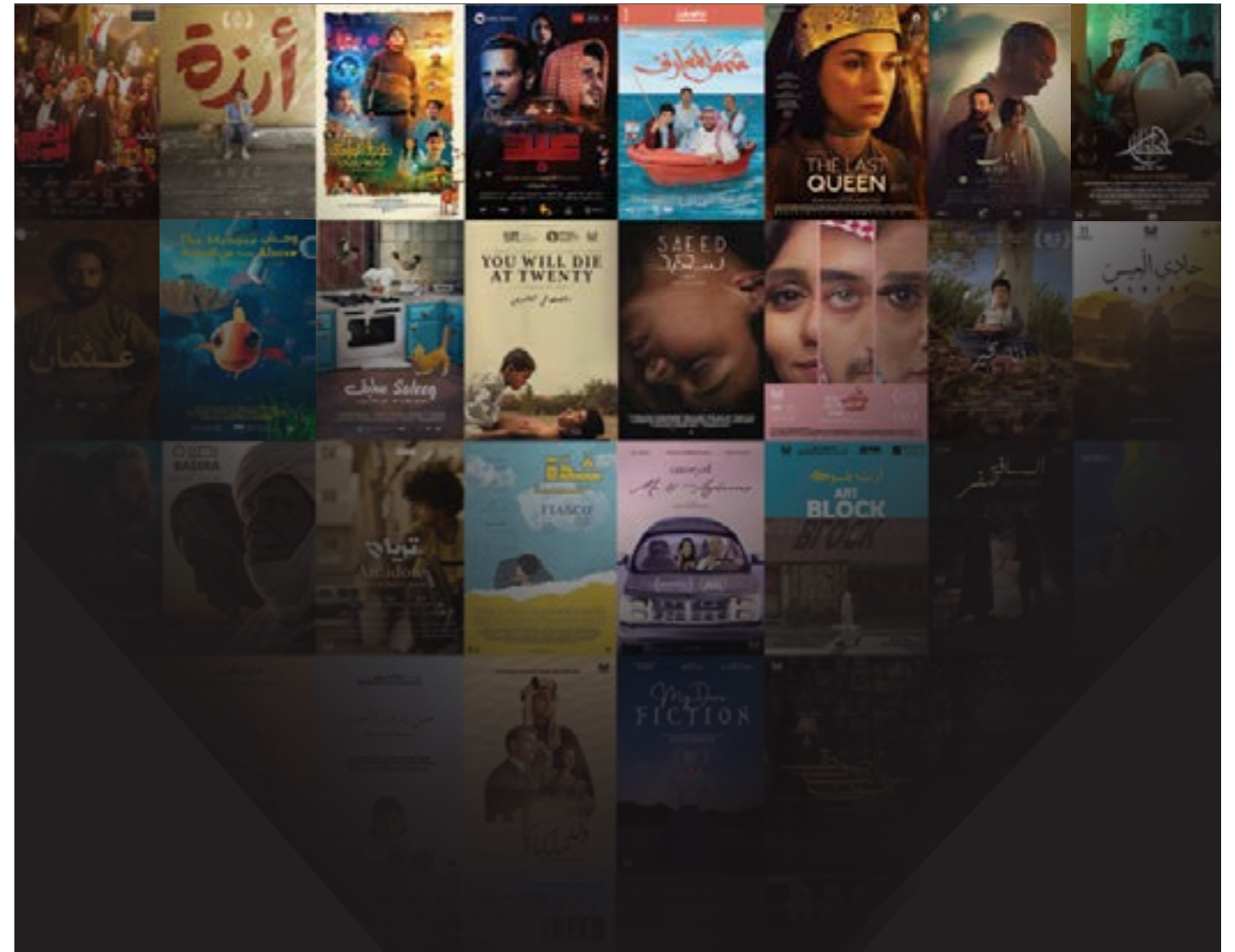
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a film by AMJAD AL-RASHEED




و وراء الجبلين
BEHIND THE MOUNTAINS
a film by MOHAMED BEN ATTIA



SIX
FEET OVER
A FILM BY KARIM BENSALAH




الحشر
THE WOODLAND
A FILM BY FIRAS AL-TAYBEH

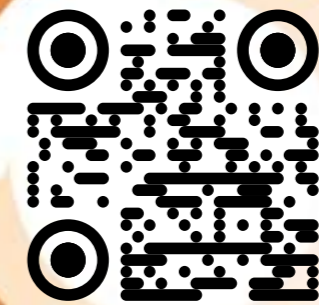


THE LAST WINTER
A FILM BY HAYDER DAWOOD




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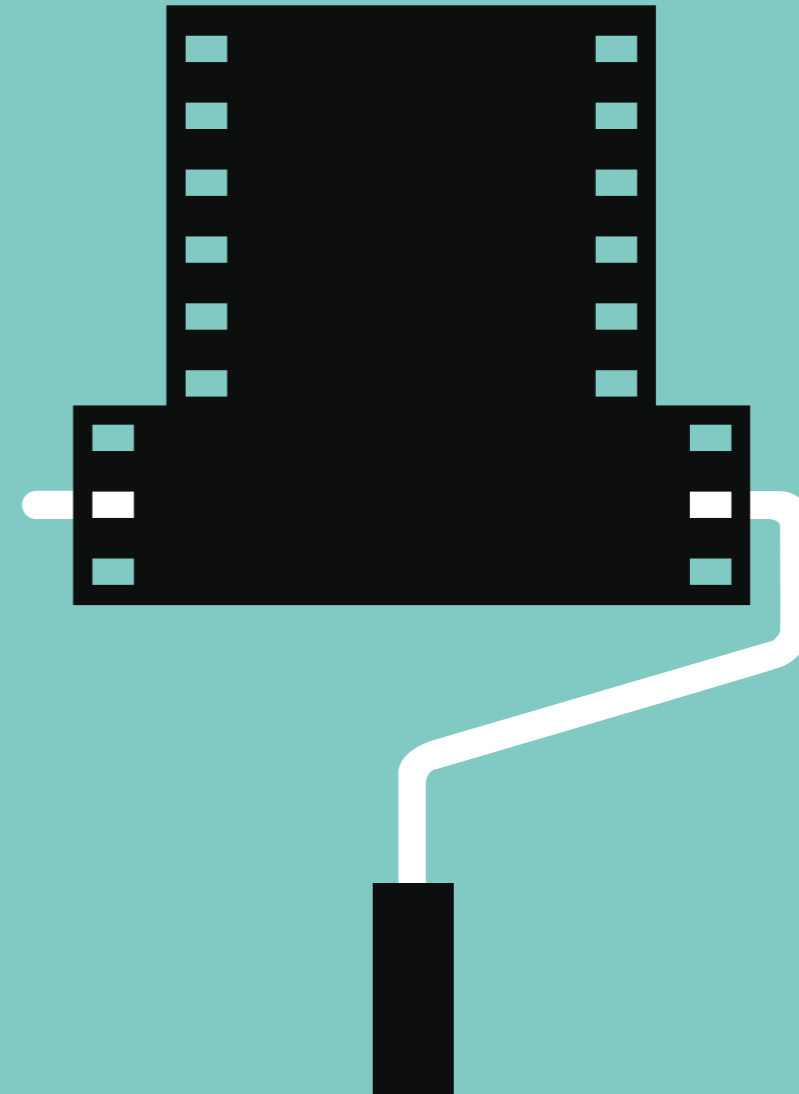
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