

THE 5TH
EDITION

RED SEA
FILM FOUNDATION

JEDDAH,
SAUDI ARABIA

THE BOOK OF PROJECTS

FOR THE

LOVE OF CINEMA

2025

مهرجان البحر الأحمر السينمائي الدولي
RED SEA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
04 ————— 13 DECEMBER, 2025

FOR THE LOVE OF CINEMA

Historic Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

December 4 – 13, 2025

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We Invest in the Future of Film..

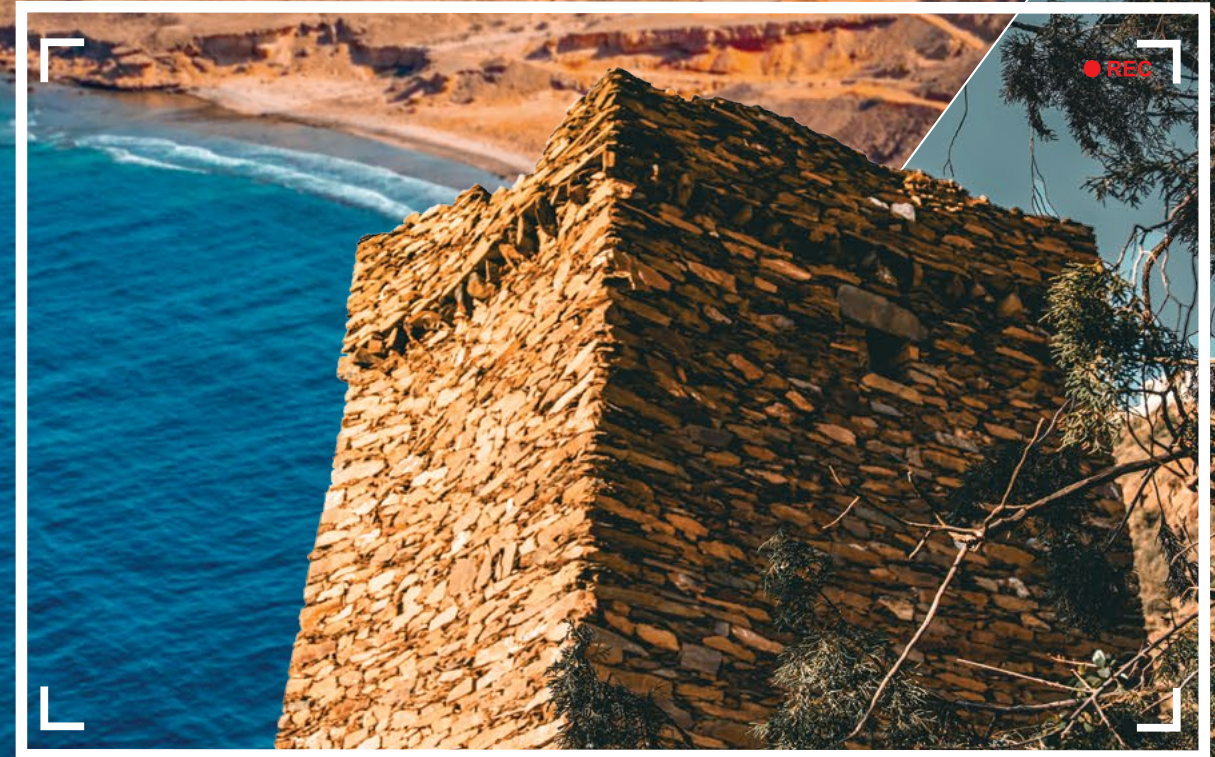
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WELCOME TO THE RED SEA SOUK PROJECT MARKET

As we celebrate five remarkable years of cinematic excellence, we are delighted to welcome you to the Red Sea Souk Project Market, sitting at the centre of our Souk activities and dedicated to supporting and promoting new voices in cinema from the Arab world, Africa, and Asia.

This Book of Projects highlights the selected projects, juries, and awards of our fifth edition — each representing the creativity, diversity, and innovation that define the Souk's mission. The Project Market embodies our ongoing commitment to championing original voices and facilitating creative exchange across all stages of film development and production.

From over 1000 applications, the Souk Project Market presents to you 32 outstanding feature projects spanning development, production, and post-production — along with 8 exciting TV series developed through the Red Sea SeriesLab. Together, they represent a snapshot of today's best Arab, African, and Asian voices.

We hope that you enjoy your time at the Souk and extend a warm Saudi welcome to both returning and new attendees. Our team is here to support in any way we can and we extend our heartfelt thanks to all participating talents, sponsors, award partners, and visitors who contribute to making the Red Sea Souk a true home for storytellers.

— The Red Sea Souk and Red Sea Labs Teams

RED SEA SOUK THE PREMIER FILM MARKET IN THE REGION

■ The Souk is more than an event; it's a celebration of vision and innovation, where local and global talents converge to share ideas, showcase projects, and shape the future of storytelling and entertainment in the region.

Here, filmmakers, producers, distributors, and industry professionals find a unique space to connect, do business, discover new voices, and forge creative partnerships that bring powerful stories to life.

Set once again in the heart of Historic Jeddah, the fifth edition of the Souk continues to stand as a vital gateway to the film industries of the Arab world, Africa, and now the entire Asian continent. Each year, it grows stronger in its mission to connect, empower, and elevate storytellers and industry professionals across borders.

The Souk serves as a vital platform for filmmakers, producers, financiers, distributors, and industry professionals, fostering meaningful dialogue, collaboration, and the development of new creative partnerships. Through its initiatives, the Souk continues to strengthen the region's film ecosystem and extend its reach to international audiences and markets. In addition to our Project Market, the Souk offers a number of opportunities for all the industry at all experience levels.

■ This year's Souk Talks programme includes some sessions curated by industry partners with the overall programme presenting a vibrant lineup of discussions and panels tackling the latest trends, technologies, and challenges shaping global cinema.

Souk Talents nurtures the next generation of the industry, offering skills, mentorship, and access to a thriving creative community.

And our ever-growing Souk Exhibition remains the region's premier platform for promoting and selling films, hosting meetings, and forging new collaborations.

As we mark five years of the Red Sea International Film Festival with a reimagined venue, we also honour the extraordinary vision, hard work, and passion of our Souk team, contributors, mentors, readers, and selection committee members whose dedication makes this program possible.

Here's to five years of cinematic legacy — and to the bold new stories, partnerships, and possibilities that await at this year's Red Sea Souk.

THE RED SEA LABS

■

Red Sea Labs is the talent development arm of the Red Sea Film Foundation, dedicated to nurturing the next generation of filmmakers and storytellers from Saudi Arabia, the Arab world, Africa, and beyond. Through an array of year-long programs, workshops, and creative residencies, the Labs provide a unique ecosystem for artists to develop their stories from concept to screen — across feature films, episodic content, sound, and beyond.

Both The Lodge and SeriesLab projects are proudly featured in this book of projects — reflecting the breadth of talent and storytelling nurtured within the Labs' programs.

“Everything starts with a story. Now in our sixth year, Red Sea Labs continues to champion bold storytellers. Voices with the courage to imagine. Our mission might seem impossible, but it is simple: to give them the space to change the world through their stories.”

— Ryan Ashore, Director, Red Sea Labs

■

About The Lodge

Now in its sixth edition, The Lodge — the Red Sea Labs' feature film residency program — is presented in collaboration with TorinoFilmLab and proudly sponsored by Film AUla. The program continues to build on its legacy of discovering and nurturing visionary filmmakers from Saudi Arabia, the Arab world, Africa, and Asia.

This year, 12 feature film projects are selected for an intensive, long-term residency that offers bespoke mentorship in story development, production, and creative direction. Participants receive guidance from international experts, engaging in collaborative sessions that refine their artistic and professional skills. The Red Sea Labs presents the 6th edition of the Lodge residency program (The Feature Films Program), in collaboration with TorinoFilmLab and proudly sponsored by Film AUla. Now in its sixth year, the Lodge continues to build on its legacy of discovering and nurturing the next generation of visionary filmmakers. This year, the Lodge welcomes 12 feature film projects from Saudi Arabia, the Arab world, Africa, and Asia for an intensive, long-term residency program. Participants benefit from invaluable mentorship by world-class experts who guide them in refining their stories and realizing their creative ambitions.

The program goes beyond script development, offering dedicated producer coaching that encompasses all aspects of professional growth — from production and financing to sales and marketing. Participants also collaborate closely with filmmakers and industry professionals across disciplines including directing, cinematography, editing, sound, post-production, and distribution.

As part of the broader Red Sea Labs initiatives, the Lodge reflects our ongoing commitment to supporting filmmakers throughout their creative journey — empowering unique voices and stories that continue to shape the future of cinema across the region and beyond.

About TorinoFilmLab

TorinoFilmLab is based in Turin (Italy) and organized by Museo Nazionale del Cinema. It is supported by Creative Europe — MEDIA sub-program of the European Union and Ministero della Cultura, and is linked to the main film institutions established in Turin and Piedmont. The Lab supports international talents and audiovisual professionals through training for film professionals, development of feature films and TV series, support to international production and distribution, and networking opportunities, thanks to the co-production market, the TFL Meeting Event, and many other occasions. All of that until the film is ready to fly solo.

About Film AUla

Film AUla, established in 2020 by the Royal Commission for AUla (RCU), is dedicated to promoting and supporting international, regional, and local film and TV productions while preserving the cultural and natural heritage of AUla in northwest Saudi Arabia. Spanning an area the size of Belgium, AUla boasts spectacular landscapes, ancient monuments, and 200,000 years of history, including Saudi Arabia's first UNESCO World Heritage Site. The agency's mission is to position AUla as a leading, cost-effective global filming destination by offering incentives, diverse locations, and a film-friendly environment. Film AUla aims to attract productions from around the world while highlighting Saudi Arabia's cinematic potential in terms of landscape, talent, and infrastructure. It is also a member of the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI), adhering to its global standards and RCU's best practices.

Arab Cinema C E N T E R

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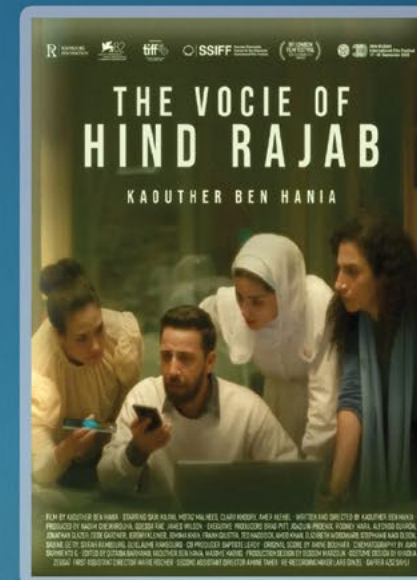
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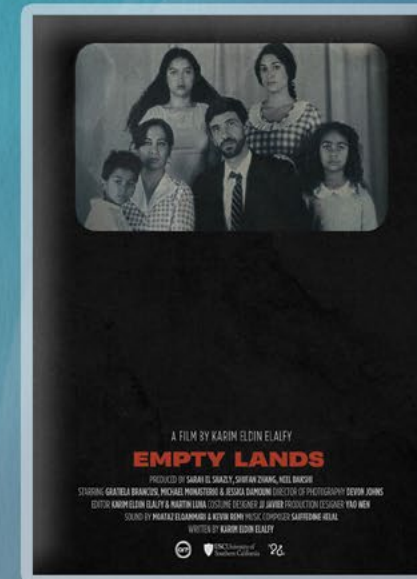
THE VOICE OF HIND RAJAB
A FILM BY KAOUTHER BEN HANNA



SINK
A FILM BY ZAIN DURAIÉ



THE SETTLEMENT
A FILM BY MOHAMED RASHAD



EMPTY LANDS
A FILM BY KARIM EL-DIN ELAFY



A SAD AND BEAUTIFUL WORLD
A FILM BY CYRIL ARIS



RED SEA SOUK PROJECT MARKET AND LABS AWARDS

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

FOR WORKS-IN-PROGRESS

Red Sea Souk Post-Production Award with a grant of	\$40,000
Red Sea Souk Jury prize Post-Production Award with a grant of	\$15,000

FOR PROJECTS IN DEVELOPMENT OR PRODUCTION

Red Sea Souk Development Award with a grant of	\$25,000
Red Sea Souk Development Award with a grant of	\$25,000
Red Sea Souk Production Award with a grant of	\$50,000
Red Sea Souk Production Award with a grant of	\$80,000
Red Sea Souk Jury Special Mention Award with a grant of	\$15,000
Red Sea Souk Breakthrough Award for a debut director with a grant of	\$20,000

FOR SERIES PROJECTS

Red Sea Souk Series Award with a grant of	\$10,000
Red Sea Souk Series Award with a grant of	\$10,000

SOUK AWARD PARTNERS



ARAB CINEMA CENTER

One in-kind award consisting of:

Arab Cinema Center Award for the producer of one Arab project to participate in the 2026 Rotterdam Lab



ART

Two awards for Arab world distribution rights consisting of:

ART Award for one Saudi Project with a Production Grant \$50,000 for a Project in Development or Production

ART Award for one Arab Project with a Production Grant \$50,000 for a Project in Development or Production



BLUEBEE PRODUCTIONS

One cash award for a Project in Development or Production, valued at \$10,000



CNC

One cash award for a Project in Development

CNC Award for one project with an amount of \$11600 (€10,000 equivalent)



DTS

One in-kind award for a project in production or post-production consisting of:

Sound post-production worth the equivalent of \$30,000



FILMMORE

One in-kind award for a Works-in-Progress film consisting of:

Full Digital Intermediate for a feature film worth the equivalent of \$32,500



FRESHLY GROUND STORIES & FINEPRINT

Two in-kind business and legal affairs awards for projects in development providing:

Professional business and legal support for each project up to a 12 month period across for any stage in the production cycle, each worth the equivalent of \$5,000



HABBAR

One cash and one in-kind award Works-in-Progress film consisting of:

One cash award of \$10,000 plus one in-kind award valued at \$40,000 for marketing services



ITHRA

One cash award for a Project in Development or Production

Ithra Award for one Saudi project with an amount of SAR 50,000



MAD SOLUTIONS

One conditional cash award for a Project in Development or Production or a Works-in-Progress

MAD World Award

\$50,000 USD as MG dedicated to world sales rights

Can be granted to one film or divided between two films (\$25,000 each)



OTICONS

One in-kind award consisting of:

The Oticons Award offers an in-kind grant worth up to \$10,000 to support one of the selected Works-in-Progress (WIP) projects through the Film Music Services provided by the Oticons film music agency including a range of services tailored to the project's specific musical needs.



SHIFT STUDIOS

Three in-kind awards consisting of:

Two promotion packages for two different Works-in-Progress films each worth the equivalent of \$12,000

One full DCP package for an additional Works-in-Progress film worth the equivalent of \$8,000



LEYTH PRODUCTION & EASY DISTRIBUTION

Two in-kind awards will be granted by the Red Sea Souk Jury, consisting of:

One in-kind award for a Project-in-Production for editing equivalent to \$50,000

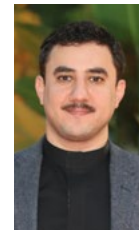
One in-kind award for a Work-In-Progress film for Film distribution in Tunisia equivalent to \$10,000

RED SEA SOUK PROJECT MARKET



RED SEA SOUK PROJECT MARKET JURIES

Red Sea Souk Projects-in-Development Jury



**ABDULRAHMAN
KHAWJ**

A film and TV executive producer and strategic advisor known for his pioneering role in shaping Saudi Arabia's film and media industry. He is currently Head of Distribution and Advisor to the CEO at Sela Studios, one of the region's fastest-growing film studios, where he oversees content strategy, distribution, and investment.

Previously, Abdulrahman was a creative executive at Netflix, helping shape the platform's Arabic-language film and series slate with a focus on Saudi content.

He began his career as founder of Cinepoetics Pictures, a Jeddah-based production company behind Saleeg, which premiered at the Annecy International Animation Film Festival in France. He now also serves as CEO of Kawkab Pictures, an independent entertainment company focused on financing and distributing innovative film and TV projects.

Abdulrahman is an alumnus of Film Independent, Berlinale Talents, and EAVE (European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs).



ELLIOTT KHAYAT

Elliott Khayat is a producer at Haut et Court. After having participated in the production of films such as "Only the Animals" and "The Night of the 12th" by Dominik Moll (7 César Awards), "Gagarine" by Fanny Liatard and Jérémy Trouilh (Cannes Film Festival 2020), or "A Chiara" by Jonas Carpignano, he has gone on producing feature films and acclaimed international coproductions such as "Santosh" by Sandhya Suri (Cannes – Un certain Regard 2024, shortlisted for the 2025 Academy Award for Best International Film), the animated film "Hola Frida", which premiered at the 2024 Morelia Film Festival and was sold all over the world, "Sukkwan Island" by Vladimir de Fontenay (in competition at Sundance Film Festival 2025), "Nino in Paradise" by Laurent Micheli (in competition, Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival 2025), or "Yellow Letters" by Ilker Çaak. He is currently producing several features and TV series.



MEISKE TAURISIA

She started producing film in 2008 with "Blind Pig Who Wants to Fly", which screened in the New Currents Competition at Busan. She continued with "Postcards from the Zoo" (2012), in Competition at Berlinale. In 2016, she co-founded Palari Films (Jakarta, Indonesia) and produced "Posesif" (2017, SGIFF) and "Aruna & Her Palate" (2018, Culinary Cinema, Berlinale). Both films won several domestic awards such as Best Director, Best Actress, Best Script Adaptation, and Best Supporting Actor. In 2021, she won the Golden Leopard at Locarno for "Vengeance Is Mine, All Others Pay Cash", and Best Cinematography at Valladolid, Spain. She also released "Ali & Ratu Ratu Queens", a Netflix Original which was no. 1 in Indonesia and Malaysia, and became the most-searched film title in Indonesia on Google. At the moment, she has a film in post-production, titled "Sleep No More", a co-production between Indonesia, Singapore, Japan, Germany, and France.

RED SEA SOUK PROJECT MARKET JURIES

Red Sea Souk Works-In-Progress Jury



MAHDI FLEIFEL

Mahdi Fleifel is a Palestinian filmmaker whose work explores themes of displacement, identity, and memory through both fiction and documentary. Based between Denmark and Greece, he graduated from the UK's National Film & Television School and founded the London-based production company Nakba FilmWorks in 2010. His debut feature, "A World Not Ours", premiered at Toronto and won over 30 awards, including the Berlinale Peace Prize and Grand Jury Prizes at Yamagata and DOC:NYC. He went on to receive the Silver Bear at Berlinale for "A Man Returned", a BAFTA nomination for "A Drowning Man", and an IDFA award for "I Signed the Petition". Fleifel's latest film, "To a Land Unknown", premiered at Cannes 2024 to widespread acclaim and received the Silver Yusr at last year's Red Sea Film Festival.



PAOLO BERTOLIN

Paolo Bertolin is the Artistic Director of Whānau Mārama: New Zealand International Film Festival. Since 2008, he has been a Consultant for the Venice International Film Festival. As a film programmer and industry consultant, he previously worked for Cannes' Directors' Fortnight, Locarno Open Doors, IFFRotterdam, the Doha Film Institute, Uclue Far East FF, Torino FF, Cannes' Semaine de la Critique, Mumbai IFF, Beijing IFF, IFFBratislava. He has production credits on Berlinale Competition entries "Big Father, Small Father and Other Stories" by Phan Dang Di, and "A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery" by Lav Diaz. He is a member of the European Film Academy, Film Independent, and the Asia Pacific Screen Awards Academy.



RUNGANO NYONI

Rungano Nyoni is a director and screenwriter who first gained recognition with her early short films, including "The List" (2009), which won a BAFTA Cymru Award, and "Mwansa the Great" (2011), which was BAFTA-nominated and selected for over 100 international film festivals. Her debut feature, "I Am Not a Witch" (2017), won her the BAFTA for Outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director or Producer and the Douglas Hickox Award at the British Independent Film Awards (BIFA), where she also won Best Director. Her follow-up, "On Becoming a Guinea Fowl" (2024), premiered at Cannes, where it received the Un Certain Regard Award for Best Director. She went on to win Best Director at BIFA once again making her a two-time recipient of the award for both of her feature films.

RED SEA SOUK PROJECT MARKET JURIES

Red Sea Labs SeriesLab Jury



DAVID DAVOLI

The President of International at Anonymous Content, overseeing the company's international division. This includes its various global joint ventures – AC Nordic, AC Brazil, AC España, AC Chapter One in the UK, AC Germany, AC Australia, and the latest addition, AC Italy. Prior to joining Anonymous Content, Davoli was the President of Television at BRON Studios, where he oversaw development, production, co-productions, financing, and sales, and was the key dealmaker across all television efforts. He pioneered BRON's international television strategy, where he identified IP, cultivated key relationships with creators, production companies, and broadcasters around the world, generated and managed complex international co-productions, raised over \$125M in production financing, built out and provided a full studio service to service and deliver those co-productions, and sold into territories across the world, including key US market. Before joining BRON, Davoli was in private practice for 13 years as an entertainment attorney, where he worked as production, finance, and distribution counsel on over 50 independent film, television and new media programs, and spent a decade developing a keen knowledge of the international marketplace.



HANA ALOMAIR

A Saudi writer and filmmaker whose work has garnered national and international recognition. Her screenplay "Hadaf" earned the Silver Palm Tree Award for Best Script at the Saudi Film Competition in 2008. Her documentary "Beyond Words" was screened at the Gulf Film Festival (2009) and selected for the main competition at the Muscat Film Festival (2010). Her second film, "The Complaint", was featured in the main competition at Tessa's Festival for Asian and African Films in Morocco (2014) and went on to win the Golden Palm Tree Award for Best Short Fiction Film in 2015. In 2019, her short film "Swan Song" received the Golden Palm Tree Award for Best Actor at the Saudi Film Festival. The following year, she co-wrote and directed "Whispers", Netflix's first Saudi original series. She also penned the script for "Sharshaf", which was awarded a \$500,000 production grant from the Red Sea Lodge. Alomair currently serves as Chairperson of the Cinema Association. In 2024, she joined MBC Studios as Creative Director and recently filmed her debut feature film, "Traveler's Hell" which will be released in theatres 2026.



JIHAN EL TAHRI

is an award-winning film producer / director, visual artist and writer. She is a member of The Academy (Oscars) since 2017 and has directed more than 15 films. Her visual art exhibitions have travelled to renowned museums and Biennales around the world. Her writings include many essays in renowned publications and has published books "Les Sept Vies de Yasser Arafat" (Grasset) and "Israel and the Arabs, The 50 Years War" (Penguin). She is a film mentor in various film labs. El Tahri serves on boards and International film organisations including IDA, PFI, FEPACI and The Guild of Filmmakers in the Diaspora.



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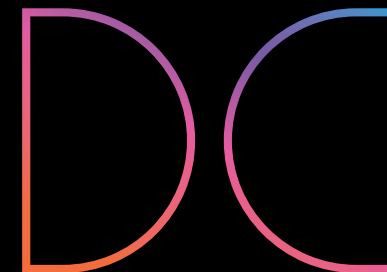
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RED SEA SOUK

PROJECTS-IN-DEVELOPMENT

A Noble Departure
A Time to Wander
About Love and September Laws
Cold Ashes Can Cause Forest Fires
Coumba
Dhel
Diaphanous
Fiction
Green Corpse
Holiday
Infidels
Leg
Nkanai
Philax
Playhouse
Positive
Price of Evil
Salma and the Moon and the Stars
Spaceman in Kongo
Street Education
The Daughter
To Catch a Falling Sky
Unholy
Veil Whispers

A Noble Departure

Genre: Comedy / Funeral Comedy
Country: Saudi Arabia
Language: Arabic
Status: In Development



Logline

When a respected ex-diplomat dies abroad under scandalous circumstances, his family rushes to preserve his legacy. Over three days of his funeral in Jeddah, the carefully curated facade begins to crumble, revealing secrets that shock both the women of the house and unexpected guests.

Synopsis

When respected Saudi businessman Nabil Al-Nahdan dies abroad, his family is devastated. But the shock deepens when they learn he wasn't detoxing at the prestigious German wellness retreat he bragged about, but in Lisbon—pursuing a rather different kind of rejuvenation. To protect his legacy and the family's name, his widow Shadia invents a more dignified story: her husband died peacefully in his sleep. Preparations for the traditional three-day funeral turn the family home into a stage of chaos and the façade further begins to crumble with the unexpected arrival of Mervat, Nabil's Egyptian wife. Her presence shakes the family's sense of order, setting off a series of revelations that expose a life far more complicated than anyone imagined. Despite all the mayhem, Shadia restores dignity and stitches the family back together with her unflinching strength and signature grace.

Director's Intention

A dark comedy about family, grief, and the chaos of keeping up appearances. Set entirely in the women's section of a Saudi funeral, it reveals how gossip, grudges, and unspoken rules collide with the pressure to stay dignified. The father's death is officially "peaceful," but hints of a messier truth hang over the family. Everyone knows something's off, yet no one dares say it—comedy comes from the silences, awkwardness, and strained performances of grief. Blending realism with stylized absurdity, the film contrasts composed frames with emotional chaos, drawing from Seth Rogen's "The Studio" and Wes Anderson's symmetry. It shows how funerals are never just solemn—they're strange, tense, and unexpectedly funny.

Production Company
 Yellow Camel Studios
 Address: Muhammed Al Bakri St. Al Andalus Dist. 6622, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
 Phone: 0966500216666
 Contact Email: Rasha@yellow-camel.com

Co-Producer
 The Writing Game, Saudi Arabia

Estimated Budget (USD):
 498,200
Financing Acquired:
 N/A

Financers:
 N/A

DAHLIA BAESHEN

DIRECTOR, WRITER



Dahlia Baeshen is a Saudi director whose films are atmospheric and character-driven, exploring family, cultural shifts, and the complexity of relationships. Her short Sugar Lies, an 8-minute bottle film, was selected at the Rajasthan International Film Festival, the Goa International Short Film Festival, and the World of Women Film Fair Middle East. Her second short, Floating in the Sand, will premiere at this year's Red Sea International Film Festival. With a background in film theory and creative writing, Baeshen crafts visually poetic stories that blend emotional core with social resonance, often venturing into psychological realms and the absurd to bring fresh Saudi images to the screen.

RASHA E. ALEMAM

PRODUCER



Saudi film and TV producer, Rasha E. AlEmam, is a leading production veteran in the world of film and television production in Saudi Arabia and has an extensive career in the entertainment industry with a history of more than 23 years of experience in management, media and production. Rasha is the Saudi producer of the international film "Desert Warrior", in addition to a large number of other local, regional and international productions. She was the Director of Productions at MBC Studios KSA and moved on to establish Yellow Camel Studios to be the leading Saudi production company specialized in local, regional and international co-productions with the largest international studios.

A Time To Wander

DEVELOPED BY THE RED SEA LABS

Genre: Drama
Country: Tunisia
Language: Arabic (Tunisian dialect)
Status: In Production



Logline

Eighteen-year-old Chadia wanders lost through the city, searching for her vanished brother. Her emotional instability and fateful encounters intensify her absolute quest for self-discovery.

Synopsis

Chadia, 18, lives alone in a makeshift dwelling in Tunis, endlessly searching for her missing brother. Drifting through the city with her boyfriend Adam, 20, she meets Abderrahmane, 21, a childhood friend of Adam's. A complex triangle forms, and the relationship between the three young people unfolds amid love, jealousy, betrayal, and dreams... transforming Chadia in ways she never anticipated. Each in their own way, Chadia, Adam, and Abderrahmane navigate their youth, confronting, through their individual journeys, the painful and uncertain passage from adolescence into adulthood.

Director's Intention

"A Time to Wander" is a feature film centered on Chadia, an 18-year-old girl searching for her missing brother. This road trip serves as a pretext to explore universal themes: youth, wandering, the search for self, rebellion, and the pain of absence. The « mise en scène » emphasizes simplicity and freedom in performance, grounded in an aesthetic where cinematography, rhythm, light, sound, and silence all reveal the characters' inner states. More than a story, this film is an attempt to capture fleeting moments of life. I wish to film Chadia's journey and those of all the other characters as if it were a single phase of life: a passage through space, time, and emotion, from adolescence into adulthood.

Production Company

Etoiles Filantes Production
 Address: 16 rue de Palestine
 Phone: +216 96456 953 /
 +21671806137
 Contact Email:
 etoilesfilantesprod@mestiri@gmail.
 com / habib.mestiri@gmail.com

Estimated Budget (USD):

600,000

Financing Acquired:
 320,000

Financers:

Ministry of Culture – Tunisia /
 Etoiles Filantes Prod / Pre-sales
 and VOD Advance (Rakcha/Le
 Colisée/Le Palace) / Partner's
 Investment (GOUBANTINI GROUP)/
 Tunisian Sponsor (Ooredoo – GAT
 Insurance– BIAT foundation)

RIM NAKHLI

DIRECTOR, WRITER



Rim Nakhli studied cinema at ISAMM in Tunis. She obtained a Master's degree in Cinema, Television, and Multimedia Production from the University of Bologna, DAMS. In 2017, she directed her first short film, Ranim, which was selected for several festivals, including Pingyao International Film Festival (Pingyao Corner), Asia South-East Short Film Fest, Mashariki African Film Festival among many others. In 2020, she directed her second short film, Nour, which was selected for Locarno Film Festival (Pardi di Domani), AFI Fest, Cairo International Film Festival, as well as several other festivals. She is currently working on her first documentary, The School of Tunis, and her first feature film, A Time to Wander, which has been selected for Talents Durban (2024 edition), Meditalents, La Fabrique Cinéma, Cannes and The Lodge, Red Sea.

HABIB MESTIRI

PRODUCER



Habib Mestiri, Tunisian producer, began his career in 1977 through amateur cinema, directing a series of short films while pursuing formal studies in film. In 1994, he played a pivotal role as a founding member of Orbit Al Oula, the first Arabic language film channel based in Italy. Serving as both executive producer and director, he developed strong expertise in television and international production within the Italian media landscape. He has collaborated with production companies and broadcasters in France, Italy, Tunisia, Niger, China, and Bosnia, showcasing a solid ability to work across borders and cultures. He produced the documentary « Subutex » by Nasredine Shili, along with many other feature films and documentaries including his own works.

About Love & September Laws

Genre: Political/Romantic Drama
Country: Sudan, France, Germany, Sweden
Language: Arabic, English
Status: In Development



Logline

In 1983 Sudan, as Sharia Law is enforced, a doctor, a translator, and an African-American journalist become entangled in love and resistance amid a nation's political upheaval.

Synopsis

A political/romantic drama inspired by true events that happened during the enforcement of Sharia Law in Sudan in 1983. When African-American journalist Carter arrives in Khartoum to cover the growing unrest, he hires Fatin, an eloquent translator with a guarded past. Unaware that she is the ex-wife of his former university flatmate, Nouri – now a respected doctor and follower of Mahmoud Mohamed Taha, a reformist Islamic thinker imprisoned for opposing the regime's use of religion as a political weapon. As Carter investigates a politically explosive government operation, concealed from the public, he finds himself increasingly drawn to Fatin. Meanwhile, Nouri is suspended from the hospital for refusing to enforce a court order to amputate a man's hand as punishment for theft. The personal and political converge when the regime accuses Taha and his disciples—including Nouri—of hearsay and sentences them to death. Carter and Fatin risk everything to save Nouri but their efforts come at a steep price, and justice often arrives too late.

Director's Intention

Like many artists, I wrestle with what must be sacrificed to pursue filmmaking. This tension between personal ambition and responsibility mirrors the film's central theme: how individual desires often collide with societal needs. The story revolves around a love triangle between an African-American journalist, a Sudanese translator, and her ex-husband. With roughly half of the dialogue in English, the film bridges cultures and remains accessible to a global audience. It also offers me a platform to engage directly with the Western world, inviting a shared conversation about faith, values, and purpose. I see this film as the second installment in a trilogy tracing Sudan's modern history and asking how we arrived at our current moment of civil war by revisiting the past. The first, Goodbye Julia, explored the separation of South Sudan and this one; the enforcement of Sharia Law. All three films share a common intent and narrative language: a political backdrop, flawed characters, moral dilemmas and a lot of emotion.

Production Company
 Klozium Studios
 Address: Pinetree Plaza –
 Kindaruma Road, Kamburu Drive
 – Nairobi, Kenya
 Phone: +973 3618 7917
 Contact Email: kordofani@klozium.com

Co-Producer
 Marc Irmer
 Company Name: Dolce Vita
 Country: France

Michael Henrichs
 Company Name: Die Gessellschaft
 – DGS
 Country: Germany

Israa Elkogali Haggstrom
 Company Name: Riverflower
 Country: Sweden

Estimated Budget (USD):
 2,800,000
Financing Acquired:
 300,000

Financers:
 Klozium Studios, Sudan

MOHAMED KORDOFANI

DIRECTOR,
 WRITER,
 PRODUCER



Mohamed Kordofani is a Sudanese aircraft engineer turned filmmaker. His work includes several short films, including "Nyerkek," which received the NAAS Award for Best Arab Film at the Carthage Film Festival in 2016. His debut feature, "Goodbye Julia," executive produced by Oscar winner Lupita Nyong'o, was the first Sudanese film to premiere at Cannes, where it won the Un Certain Regard's Prix de la Liberté. The film went on to win 65 additional awards, including Audience Awards at El Gouna and Singapore International Film Festivals, and the Jean Renoir Prize from the French Ministry of Education. Kordofani is the co-founder of Klozium Studios, a production house based in Khartoum, the UAE, and Nairobi.

KHALED ALWALEED

WRITER



Khaled Alwaleed is a Sudanese screenwriter and filmmaker. He co-wrote "Goodbye Julia" by Mohamed Kordofani, which won the Freedom Prize at Cannes (2023), as well as Best Screenplay at the Malmö Arab Film Festival and the ACC Critics Awards. He is currently co-writing a Sudanese feature with Kordofani and a Saudi feature with Meshal Al Jasir. His recent documentary series, "Nas Shagala," created amid Sudan's ongoing war, captures the quiet heroism of ordinary lives.

KHALID AWAD

PRODUCER



Khalid Awad is a Sudanese producer and cinematographer. In 2013, he founded Highlight Productions, which later merged with Kordofani Films to form Klozium Studios, based in Kenya and Sudan. He co-produced "Goodbye Julia" by Mohamed Kordofani, winner of the Freedom Prize at Cannes 2023, and "Al-Sit" by Suzannah Mirghani, winner of the Grand Prix and Audience Award at Clermont-Ferrand 2021. He is also the producer of "Nas Shagala," a documentary series highlighting civic work and grassroots initiatives in Sudan. As a cinematographer, Khalid has shot a wide range of narrative films, commercials, and documentaries, earning Best Cinematography awards for his work on "Al-Sit" and "Nyerkek."

Cold Ashes Can Cause Forest Fires

Genre: Psychological Family Drama
Country: France, India
Language: Hindi, English
Status: In Development



Logline

At an off-season hotel in the Himalayas during winter, Uma lives alone with her father. When family friends come to visit, Uma suspects a disturbing intimacy between her father and his friend's wife. Her silent rage at this whispered betrayal ends up exposing everyone's wounds...

Synopsis

Uma (13) lives alone with her father Milind, who manages a colonial hotel in a secluded town in the Himalayas. Her mother left them a few months ago without any promise of a return. Uma blames Milind for her mother's departure and is resentful towards him. During the Christmas holidays, off-season at the hotel, old family friends visit to keep them company. Uma at first is rejoiced to be reunited with her dear friend, Kali. What initially holds a promise of respite, quickly throws her life into disarray as she suspects her father of having an affair with Kali's mother. Assuming this to nullify any prospect of her mother's return and feeling betrayed by her father, she decides to punish both adults. The consequences are far graver than she had anticipated – Milind and Kali's mother both get seriously injured. Uma is forced to take care of her father while contending with the possible discovery of her culpability. Milind too begins to suspect that his caregiver is also his perpetrator. Fearing that the police might discover Uma's role in the fire, he starts creating false testimonies to frame their driver, Vibhu. He asks Uma to act oblivious of Vibhu's whereabouts on the evening of the fire. When Uma is called in for questioning by the police, she insists on going alone, leaving Milind clueless about her intentions.

Director's Intention

I remember my childhood being filled with a stream of people going in and out of our home. My young parents kept our door open to students, working professionals, basically anyone who wanted to share a drink and a joke. Being a single child, I became a quiet spectator to the lives of adults. I quickly discovered that they often deceive each other to not harm their social and intimate relationships. They would disregard the honesty that they preach.

In this film, I dive into my memories and transmute them. The protagonist, Uma, punishes her father for this hypocrisy but when jolted out of the naivete of childhood, she realises she has created her own terrible secret. What do we do when we become the thing that we detest? Adolescence, a period on the cusp of change, is a fertile ground to explore questions of selfhood. With the father and daughter as the nucleus, I am attempting a choral film that scrutinises families, and through it the Indian society that they and I inhabit.

Production Company
 Salt for Sugar Films
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 75010, Paris, France
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 Contact Email: contact@
 saltforsugarfilms.com

Co-Producer
 Off Season Films, India

Estimated Budget (USD):
 980,000
Financing Acquired:
 170,000

Financers:
 Hubert Bals Script Development
 Fund (Netherlands), TorinoFilmLab
 (Italy),
 Salt for Sugar Films (France), Off
 Season Films (India).

ASHMITA GUHA NEOGI

WRITER, DIRECTOR



Ashmita Guha Neogi (1991) is a writer-director based out of Delhi, India. She studied Film Direction & Screenwriting at the Film and Television Institute of India. Her diploma film, "CatDog" (2020), won top prizes at Cinéfondation at Cannes and NEST at San Sebastián. Her next film, "Silan" (2023), premiered at San Sebastián. She is currently developing her first feature, "Cold Ashes Can Cause Forest Fires." The project was awarded the Hubert Bals Script Development Fund in 2022. It participated in Munich FilmUp and BoostNL in 2023, Torino Feature Lab in 2024, and is a current participant at the EAVE Producer's Workshop 2025.

Ashmita Guha Neogi's art practice investigates taboos and delves into the discomforting realm of human relationships. In her narratives, she creates space for a negotiation between the real and the surreal. Her training in Odissi, an Indian classical dance form, seeps into her filmmaking practice as she carefully choreographs intimate and sometimes tense interactions between characters.

AVANTIKA SINGH DESBOUVRIES

PRODUCER



Avantika Singh Desbouvries (1991) holds a BA in English Literature and an MA in Film and Photography. Based in Paris, she studied cinema at the International Film and Television School. Her producing credits include "After" (Berlinale 2023), "Casablanca" (Venice Days 2023), "In Retreat" (Cannes ACID 2024), and "Divine Comedy" (Venice Orizzonti 2025). Her short films have screened at San Sebastián, SXSW, and Clermont-Ferrand.

Exploring themes of displacement, memory, and belonging, Avantika founded Salt for Sugar Films (Paris) in 2018 and Off Season Films (India) in 2021 to connect South Asian and European auteurs through emotionally resonant, cross-cultural storytelling.

Coumba

Genre: Fiction, Drama
Country: Senegal, France
Language: English, French
Status: In Development

Production Company
 Les Films du Bilboquet
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 Lebas, 59100 Roubaix, France
 Phone: +33 6 60 54 90 68
 Contact Email:
 eugeniemichelvillette@
 lesfilmsdubilboquet.fr

Maayo
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 ,Unite 26, villa 808, Dakar 99999
 Senegal
 Contact email: dia.mamaid@gmail.
 com

Co-Producer
 -

Estimated Budget (USD):
 942,673
Financing Acquired:
 37,673

Financers:
 Hubert Bals – script development,
 Les Films du Bilboquet (France),
 Maayo (Senegal), Fopica: planned.



MAMADOU DIA

WRITER, DIRECTOR



Mamadou Dia is a Senegalese writer and director. His two features were Senegal's official Oscar entries for 2021 and 2026. His first feature, "Baamum Nafi" ("Nafi's Father," 2019), won two Golden Leopards for Best First Feature and Filmmakers of the Present at the Locarno International Film Festival. His second feature, "Demba" (2024), premiered in the Berlinale Encounters section. His short film "Samedi Cinema" premiered at the Venice and Toronto International Film Festivals in 2016 and received numerous awards. Dia is the co-founder of the production company Joyeclidi, which organizes mobile screenings across Senegal. He is also a 2023 Guggenheim Fellow.

EUGÉNIE MICHEL VILLETTE

PRODUCER



Eugénie Michel Villette is a producer with over 20 years of experience. She founded Les Films du Bilboquet, a female-led independent production company based in France that focuses on creative documentary films. Les Films du Bilboquet champions bold new world cinema, hybrid formats that blend documentary with animation and fiction, and a strong commitment to supporting emerging talents.

Eugénie has produced more than 40 films, including 20 international co-productions. Since 2020, she has also been directing the Alaka Film Lab, a development workshop dedicated to cinema in Central Africa.

Logline

A police inspector returns to his hometown to investigate a murder linked to a mysterious spirit. As the Wolf Moon rises, he faces the town's fears, hidden rituals, and a past that refuses to stay buried.

Synopsis

In the small town of Matam, every Friday night brings whispers of Coumba, a mysterious woman-like spirit whose sightings leave witnesses with red eyes and days of silence. Years after a headline-making murder under the sacred tree, the town remains gripped by fear and reverence. Ins, an inspector sent from the capital, returns to investigate. Once a local, he left for the city and now feels like a stranger in his own home. Dado is the only witness to Coumba's last appearance. Dado's house has become a gathering point for the women of the community, who perform nightly rituals to protect themselves and the town. Dado and Ins were more than friends, but Ins, logical and skeptical, avoids confronting her, focusing instead on evidence and procedure. As the investigation unfolds, Ins confronts his own memories, and the complex bonds that tie him to Dado and the town. Friday night approaches. Saving the city is each side's aim.

Director's Intention

I grew up with stories of Coumba Koltiel, a spirit who appeared on full-moon Fridays. Later, when the electricity came, Coumba stayed mostly in the sacred tree. As a child, I was also going with women who walked miles daily to fetch water: moments that were both labor and social bonding. When modernization brought running water, these shared spaces disappeared.

Coumba explores how rituals shape community identity in a changing world. Through Ins's investigation, the film questions what happens when rituals fade and how modern life alters collective rhythms. It's not about superstition but about connection — how people create meaning through belief, repetition, and togetherness.

Coumba will unfold as a nocturnal journey, blending realism with the surreal glow of the full moon. Working with non-actors and local communities, we aim to capture both the mystery and tenderness of a place where the spirit world still speaks softly through human voices.

Dhel (Evanesce)

DEVELOPED BY THE RED SEA LABS

Genre: Psychological Thriller/Mystery
Country: Saudi Arabia
Language: Arabic, English
Status: In Development



Logline

When a young Saudi artist haunted by her father's legacy joins an isolated art residency in AlUla, she discovers a cursed paintbrush that awakens a ghostly muse, forcing her to confront the darkness she's inherited before it consumes her completely.

Synopsis

Nour, an artist burdened by her father's abandonment, arrives at a secluded art residency in AlUla, hoping to rebuild her life far from the weight of his famous name. But her assigned studio stands beside ancient graves, and a hidden paintbrush awakens something buried in the land.

When Nour paints, a figure emerges: Nahr, a mysterious man bound to the farm, seen only in her art, mirrors, and dreams. He becomes both muse and danger, their intoxicating bond mirroring the very wounds that broke them. Through haunting visions, Nour uncovers Nahr's tragic past: in a desperate attempt to make his serial-monogamist father pay for the abandonment he inflicted on countless wives and children, Nahr set fire to his father's latest wedding. The inferno killed an entire village, trapping Nahr's soul and condemning him to repeat his father's legacy: luring wounded women to their deaths.

Nour is the first he actually loves, the first he refuses to harm. But that love drives the land to rot and the dead to rise.

To survive, she must break the curse and free the lost souls, including his. And in doing so, she frees herself, no longer defined by any man's name.

Director's Intention

"Do we carry our parents, or do they carry us?"

"Evanesce" is a story about obsession, grief, and the fragile boundary between creation and destruction. It grew out of my fascination with how the father-wound lingers. How it quietly shapes a daughter's choices, even when she believes she's free of it. I wanted to explore how love, absence, and validation can blur until the difference no longer matters, and how sometimes we keep chasing the same pain just to feel close to where it began.

The haunting in "Evanesce" is emotional before it's supernatural. It's about inheritance; the patterns, silences, and obsessions passed down through "love." Set against AlUla's vast stillness, the film captures how beauty and darkness can coexist within the same soul.

In the end, it is about confronting what shaped us, and realizing that sometimes the ghosts we're running from aren't behind us, but already within us.

Production Company
 RIGHTERS HOUSE
 Email: info@rightershhouse.com
 Phone: +966 544 844 048
 Location: Jeddah 23436-3150

Co-Producer
 -

Estimated Budget (USD):
 1,766,000
Financing Acquired:
 100,000

Financers:
 Private investors.

DANIA ALTAYEB

WRITER, DIRECTOR



Dania is a screenwriter, director, and development producer specializing in television and film. She has been selected for several prestigious programs, including the first Netflix Middle East Lab with NCIG, the MEMI Series Development Program with the University of Southern California, the SRMG x NEOM x Telfaz11 Lab with Maflam, the Red Sea SeriesLab with Film Independent, and The Lodge by the Red Sea International Film Festival with TorinoFilmLab. Her work includes projects such as "Sundus 1," "Eyal Nouf," "El Farah Farahna," "Kharej Alsaytara," and "Banat Almolakama" (Season 3). She has directed one short film and is currently working on her second. Beyond her creative work, Dania also leads workshops and mentors emerging writers, championing new Saudi and Arab voices in film and television.

WAAD JANBI

CO-WRITER



Waad Janbi is a Saudi screenwriter and script supervisor who views cinema as a space to explore identity and amplify women's voices. She holds a Master's degree in Screenwriting from Long Island University in New York. Her work includes contributing to feature films such as "Al Qayd" and "Hobal," as well as several short films. Alongside her creative practice, Waad teaches in the Department of Visual and Audio Production at King Abdulaziz University, where she shares her passion for storytelling with a new generation of filmmakers. She has also participated in several specialized film programs and workshops. Waad is currently part of the sixth edition of the Red Sea Lodge at the Red Sea International Film Festival. Her cinematic vision is rooted in feminist storytelling, memory, and identity.

Diaphanous

Genre: Drama
Country: Iran, Hong Kong, France, Norway, Mexico
Language: Farsi
Status: In Development



Nan Goldin

Logline

Diaphanous. She is not what she thinks she is. She is what she hides.

Synopsis

The world falls on Roshanak the day she discovers that her husband broke his promise by informing his family of her imminent departure to Paris. A family crisis erupts. Her father-in-law decides to divorce the couple, and her own father confiscates her passport. Roshanak takes refuge with her elder sister Mojdeh in northern Iran. Mojdeh consoles her sister and promises to help and get the passport back.

The independent and free-spirited Mojdeh had been disowned a long time ago by her father for her overly expressive paintings and her marriage against his wishes. However, Roshanak discovers that her older sister seems to have given up painting. Moreover, she does not object to the opinions of her husband Amir, and spends her days looking after her daughter Jana while teaching arts in Jana's school basement.

While the sisters go on a quest to get the passport, Roshanak begins to question the urgency of leaving. Wouldn't Mojdeh need help to get out of the box she has trapped herself in? Roshanak decides to try to wake Mojdeh up.

Director's Intention

I want to put the whole of Iranian society into this family, as it is such an important part of Iranian culture. Family pushes people to make choices that don't correspond to them. The pressure exerted by them limits people's individual freedoms in their intimate lives and may destroy individuals for the so-called well-being of the group it forms.

"Diaphanous" is about women who have become invisible to themselves and to others. It's the Iran of today. This reality of our lives, mine and that of my sisters, is a necessity for me to put into images on the giant screens of cinema.

Cinema is not about what you show, but about what you hide. For me, seeking to understand and see the invisible is the ultimate cinema. Therefore I will use my off-screen to allow the audience to construct the complete picture for themselves.

Production Company
 Chinese Shadows Limited
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 Centre II 21 Lam Hing St., Kowloon
 Bay, Kowloon, Hong Kong
 Contact Email: chineseshadows@
 gmail.com

Co-Producer
 Shasha & Co Production, France

Estimated Budget (USD):
 466,003
Financing Acquired:
 253,360

Financers:
 Chinese Shadows (Hong Kong),
 Private Equity (Iran), Shasha &
 Co Production (France), Torino
 FeatureLab Co-Production Award
 (Italy), Paloma Negra (Mexico),
 Sorfond (Norway).

DORNAZ HAJIHA

WRITER, DIRECTOR



Born in 1988 in Tehran, Dornaz Hajjha received her Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design from Al Zahra University, Tehran, in 2011, and completed her MA in Film Production in 2015 from the London Film School.

She has made short films, documentaries, and fiction works. Her shorts "Marziyeh" and "Marlon," produced in 2017, have been screened and awarded at numerous film festivals. Her debut feature film "Like a Fish on the Moon" had its world premiere in the 2022 Proxima Competition at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival. In 2023, she was invited to join La Factory North Portugal to co-direct "Maria" with Mario Macedo. This short premiered at Cannes Directors' Fortnight.

ISABELLE GLACHANT

PRODUCER



Journalist for the French TV station Canal+, Isabelle Glachant began her career in cinema as the executive producer of "Shanghai Dreams" (Wang Xiaoshuai, Cannes Jury Prize, 2005). Since then, she has produced the first official French-Chinese co-production, "11 Flowers" by Wang Xiaoshuai, and worked with renowned Asian filmmakers such as Lou Ye, Mouly Surya, and Wang Bing, as well as emerging talents like Lei Lei ("Silver Bird and Rainbow Fish," IFFR Competition 2022), Eddie Cahyono ("My Mother," Indonesia, in production), and Dornaz Hajjha ("Diaphanous," in development, Iran). Glachant was named a Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters by the French Ministry of Culture for her contributions to developing French-Asian co-productions.

LYA LI

PRODUCER



Lya Li is in charge of production, project development and funding at Chinese Shadows. She was the Head of festivals at Asian Shadows representing Asian films worldwide from 2017 to 2023, among which, Marlina The Murderer in Four Acts by Mouly Surya (2017, Cannes Directors' Fortnight), Mrs. Fang by Wang Bing (2017, Locarno Golden Leopard), Like a Fish on the Moon by Dornaz Hajjha (2022, Karlovy Vary Proxima Competition).

Fiction

Genre: Creative Documentary
Country: Thailand
Language: Thai
Status: In Development



Logline

In an imagined Thai courtroom, survivors of 2010 military crackdown present their testimonies, staging the trial they were never granted in real life.

Synopsis

This film takes place in a courtroom. The witnesses giving testimony are not actors. They are describing, in their own words, what they saw during a protest in 2010, when the military murdered 99 people in central Bangkok. The protestors were calling for basic democratic elections. In the film, the victims are being represented by a human rights attorney, also not an actor. In fact, there are no actors in this film. However, it is also not a documentary. That is because the trial that is taking place is not real. It is being staged for the film. In reality, the Thai government has not allowed the state violence committed in 2010 to be presented in an open public trial. So the trial in this film is occurring in an imagined future, a future that I hope one day becomes a reality. The film is structured around the life-cycle of a courtroom trial. It begins with the legal team investigating the crime, gathering evidence and traveling around the country interviewing witnesses. They will then present their evidence to the courtroom, relying on witness testimony to create a narrative, culminating with the attorney's closing arguments. After the trial, late at night, the lawyer will phone one of the lead witnesses. This witness's daughter was a volunteer medic who was shot eleven times inside a Buddhist temple. Her mother will ask the lawyer, "what is the verdict?". The film will end, without an answer.

Director's Intention

The formal and narrative design of "Fiction" is driven by ethical as well as political concerns. By using fiction as a container for real testimony, the film challenges the binaries of truth and representation, documentary and imagination. It deliberately inhabits the gray area between what happened and what should have happened, in order to confront the audience with the magnitude of what was lost—not just in terms of lives, but in the erasure of justice itself.

The film draws inspiration from works that have challenged the boundaries of nonfiction cinema. It follows in the lineage of Joshua Oppenheimer's "The Act of Killing" (2012), which allowed perpetrators of Indonesian state violence to theatrically reenact their crimes. But "Fiction" turns this structure inside out. Instead of perpetrators, it centers on the victims. Instead of reenacting the past, it imagines a future that has yet to exist.

Production Company
 Diversion
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Electric Eel Films
 Address: 161/92 Baan Klang
 Muang, Soi Onnut 17, Sukhumvit
 77 Suan Luang, Bangkok 10250
 Thailand
 Phone: +66 2 084 1745
 Contact Email: electriceel@films@gmail.com

Co-Producer
 -

Estimated Budget (USD):
 611,392
Financing Acquired:
 308,275

Financers:
 Creative Capital (USA), Hettleman
 Research Grant (USA), Mayselos
 Documentary Center (USA), NY
 State Council of the Arts (USA).

ANOCHA SUWICHAKORNPONG

WRITER, DIRECTOR



Anocha Suwichakornpong is a filmmaker whose work is deeply influenced by Thailand's social and political history. Her second feature, "By the Time It Gets Dark", explores the 1976 Thammasat University massacre, in which Thai state forces and right-wing paramilitaries killed scores of student protesters. The film premiered at the Locarno Film Festival in Switzerland and screened at major festivals such as Toronto, London, Viennale, and Rotterdam. Her most recent feature, "Come Here", premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2022. She is currently an Associate Professor in the MFA Film Program at Columbia University. Anocha's work has been the subject of retrospectives at institutions such as the Museum of the Moving Image in New York, TIFF Cinematheque in Toronto, Cinema Moderne in Montreal, and the Fukuoka International Film Festival.

MAI MEKSAWAN

PRODUCER



Mai Meksawan is a Bangkok-based producer from Diversion, Thailand. His credits as producer include "Manta Ray" (dir. Phuttiphong Aroonpheng), winner of the Orizzonti Award for Best Film at the 2018 Venice Film Festival; "Come Here" (dir. Anocha Suwichakornpong), 2021 Berlinale Forum; "Anatomy of Time" (dir. Jakrawal Nilthamrong), 2021 Venice Orizzonti and Grand Prize winner at Tokyo FILMeX; and "Solids by the Seashore" (dir. Patiparn Boontarig), 2023 Busan Film Festival, LG OLED New Currents Award. Since 2022, Diversion has also branched out to sales and is now handling world sales of Asian arthouse films including "Amoeba" (dir. Tan Siyou, Singapore), "Spying Stars" (dir. Vimukthi Jayasundara, Sri Lanka), "Sand City" (dir. Mahde Hasan, Bangladesh), and "Phantosmia" (dir. Lav Diaz, Philippines).

Green Corpse

DEVELOPED BY THE RED SEA LABS

Genre: Drama/Crime
Country: Saudi Arabia
Language: Arabic
Status: In Production



Logline

Malek, a teenage sprinter chasing a championship, is pulled back by his father, who smuggles a prohibited plant in a mortuary van. Between a father's love and the threat of stigma, Malek fights not to inherit his family's sins.

Synopsis

A body lies under a white sheet on a farm. Night falls. Police chase a hearse. A judge reads a sentence. We do not know who the accused is. In Jazan, between green mountains and old coastal villages, lives Malek, 18. He thinks speed can save him. He wants to play football, but he struggles with teams. His father, Omar, drives a mortuary van and secretly moves qat to pay an old debt to Qasim. His mother, Manal, cooks to help with money. His sister, Reham, studies at university. His little brother, Ali, needs a role model. The family cares for each other, but the past and poverty hurt them. Teacher Adnan sees Malek's talent and introduces him to Olympic champion Hadi Su'an Sumaill. Real training starts: pool drills, breathing, a timer. Malek is very fast, but danger is close. Omar keeps smuggling. Qasim pushes for payment. Uncle Colonel Mansour is suspicious. Tension grows at home. The family's curse is a vortex. Every finish line moves away. Malek must choose: save his home and lose his dream, or protect his dream and risk his home. On race day, by the judge's order, police close in. Malek runs, chased.

Director's Intention

"No matter how fast he runs, the finish line keeps moving."

"Green Corpse" is a multi-generational tragedy. Story of a family drowning in debt and reputation, told through the eyes of a dreamy teenage boy, Malek. I find myself closer to this film, as a director/writer who belongs to the city of Jizan, and my connection to the story, the characters, and the other elements constitute a personal thoughts that I have always been emotionally attached to, which is the idea of escaping, chasing, and the whirlpool of this life. How can I narrate this with sensitive realism? The film asks: How much of yourself would you destroy for family? What about the history, is it a loop? or a linear? or maybe a circle that Malek is trying to break! He runs away from reality while chasing a future that may not exist.

Production Company
Vues Consultancy & Film
Production
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Co-Producer
-

Estimated Budget (USD):
1.6M
Financing Acquired:
50,000

Financers:
Red Sea Fund (Award) –
MBC Academy (Award) –
Saudi Arabia

KHALED ZIDAN

WRITER, DIRECTOR



Independent filmmaker from southern Saudi Arabia. A writer and director of both fiction and documentary films, with a background as a cinematographer and editor, he is drawn to realist cinema and visual arts. He was nominated for the International Competition at the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival, and won the Saudi Golden Palm Award for Best Short Film as well as the jury award at MaimoFF for his film "Mera, Mera, Mera." Over the past decade, he has directed more than five independent short films that have received international awards. His previous short film, "Othman," is available on Netflix.

BAKR ALDUHAIM

PRODUCER



Bakr Alduhaim is an award-winning Saudi film producer, consultant, and founder of Vues Consultancy & Film Production, a Riyadh-based company dedicated to bridging Saudi cinema with global audiences. With a distinctive cinematic voice, he has led international collaborations—particularly between Saudi Arabia and France—and mentored emerging filmmakers through initiatives such as The Pitch Buzz, 48h Film Challenge, and Francophone Film Week. His films, including Mera, Mera, Mera—winner of the Golden Palm for Best Saudi Short—and Après G Zèr, have premiered at leading festivals such as the Red Sea and Clermont-Ferrand, reflecting his commitment to crafting powerful, cross-cultural stories rooted in authenticity and artistic excellence.

Holiday

Genre: Drama
Country: France, Lebanon, Italy
Language: Arabic, French
Status: In Development



Logline

1986. Chadi and his family flee Beirut from bombings. During this forced holiday in a safe haven, the teenager will face war and love in unusual ways.

Synopsis

Beirut-West, 1986. Chadi, a 13-year-old boy and his family must flee the bombing of their neighborhood. They take refuge in Chadi's aunt's apartment in Sidon, a large town in southern Lebanon. The forced vacation in a place in the middle of political insecurities leads Chadi to create an unexpected friendship, but first and foremost, to live his first love.

Director's Intention

My teenage years in Lebanon were marked by tenderness and cruelty, shaped by the need to find my place in a world torn by war. When death is a constant threat, do the little things in life still hold meaning? This film reflects on my generation, growing up in Lebanon's chic neighborhoods as the country crumbled. Exiled to Sidon, I discovered teenage emotions amidst life as a refugee, encountering militias and armed kids my age with different realities. Through a poetic story tinged with youthful cynicism, I explore this unique atmosphere.

Chadi, a 13-year-old introvert, navigates the small society of family and friends, balancing between childhood and adolescence. Naive about love and war, he experiments, takes risks, beginning an offbeat coming-of-age journey as war looms in the background. This story is not about war itself but about humanity within it – a tale of love and friendship during adolescence in wartime.

Production Company
 Aurora Films, Charlotte Vincent & Katia Khazak
 Address: 9 rue Lapeyrière, 75018 Paris
 Phone: +33 1 47 70 43 01
 Contact Email: production@aurorafilms.fr

Co-Producer
 Pierre Sarraf
 Company Name: NÉ À BEYROUTH FILMS
 Country: Lebanon

Marco Valerio Fusco
 Company Name: INTRAMOVIES
 Country: Italy

Estimated Budget (USD):
 1,500,000
Financing Acquired:
 557,573.23

Financers:
 CNC – Aide aux Cinémas du Monde, France (public production fund); CNC MIC, France & Italy (public co-production fund); CNC MIC, France & Italy (public co-development fund); Red Sea Fund (development fund); MEDIA (development fund); CNC Award at Thessaloniki Crossroads, France (award grant); Intramovies (international sales).

WISSAM CHARAF

WRITER, DIRECTOR



Born in Beirut on June 1, 1973, Wissam Charaf has directed seven short films that have been selected and awarded at several festivals, including Venice, Locarno, and Clermont-Ferrand. His feature films "Heaven Sent" and "Dirty, Difficult, Dangerous" were respectively selected for the ACID section at Cannes 2016 and the Giornate degli Autori section at Venice 2022, where the latter won the Europa Cinemas Award. His latest short film, "If the Sun Drowned into an Ocean of Clouds," won the Special Jury Prize in the National Competition at Clermont-Ferrand after being selected for the Orizzonti section at Venice in 2023.

JIHANE CHOUAIB

CO-WRITER



Jihane Chouaib is a French-Lebanese writer and director. Born in Beirut during the civil war, she grew up in Mexico and studied in France, where she now resides—a journey shaped by nostalgia, anti-colonial politics, and *realismo mágico*. As a director, she explores a range of genres from fantasy to documentary, guided by emotion, sensuality, and poetry, and she champions strong, non-conforming female characters. Her two feature films, both shot in Lebanon as European co-productions, are "Dream Country" (2012) and "Go Home" (2016), starring Golshifteh Farahani.

KATIA KHAZAK

PRODUCER



Born in Moscow, Katia Khazak studied cinema and cultural management in Paris. She began her career as Cultural Attaché at the French Embassy in Kazakhstan before joining the international sales company Wide in Paris in 2011. Since 2014, she has been part of Aurora Films. She is currently producing the work of Mongolian director Lkhagvadulam Purev-Ochir, whose short films have been awarded at Venice, Locarno, and Toronto. Her debut feature, "City of Wind," won Best Actor at Orizzonti – Venice 2023 and was selected by more than 70 festivals. Together with Charlotte Vincent, she has also produced "Return to Seoul" by Davy Chou (Un Certain Regard – Cannes 2022), "Dirty, Difficult, Dangerous" by Wissam Charaf (Giornate degli Autori – Venice 2022), and "The Beast in the Jungle" by Patric Chiha (Panorama – Berlin 2023).

Infidels (Infidèles)

Genre: Dystopian Comedy
Country: Canada
Language: French Canadian
Status: In Development



Logline

In a near future, Omar, a young Arab migrant, is forced into a pilot immigration program: revive a dying village in 30 days, or disappear.

Synopsis

In an experimental immigration program, Omar, a young Arab migrant, is sent to a forgotten French-Canadian village on the brink of collapse. His mission: help revitalize the community within one month to earn his right to stay. If he fails, he disappears, like those who came before him. Omar throws himself into the task. He repairs what's broken, nurtures the lonely, and bends himself to the needs of a town that barely tolerates his presence. But slowly, something shifts. The fields begin to bloom. A grieving family smiles again. Omar becomes useful, needed, and even desired. But his growing acceptance is fragile. When he discovers Adama, an African migrant who escaped the same program, a silent brotherhood forms. Their bond, however, risks unsettling the delicate trust Omar has fought to earn. As the village prepares to vote on his fate, Omar is pushed toward an unspeakable act, one that will determine not only whether he stays, but who he becomes. In a world that welcomes migrants only when they serve, Omar must decide how much of himself he's willing to give, and what will be left when he's done giving.

Director's Intention

"Infidels" is born from my lifelong struggle with exclusion and belonging. Growing up in southern Lebanon, I witnessed how difference—social, sexual, cultural—led to stigma, while my own marginalization remained unspoken. Migration to Canada brought freedom but also the pressure to conform to narrow, stereotypical images of Arab men. This fueled my need to reclaim authorship and challenge systems of integration built on control and conformity. Framed as a dystopian fable, "Infidels" dismantles the myth of the "good immigrant," exposing how immigration policies reduce people to measurable traits while treating them as bodies under surveillance. Through Omar's journey, the film restores nuance and dignity to the Arab migrant's representation. Set in a Canadian village yet resonating across the Arab world, Infidels confronts urgent questions of displacement and identity, resisting erasure and amplifying Arab voices with intimacy, critique, and humanity.

Production Company
 Périphéria
 Address: 5333 Casgrain av, Suite
 1109, Montreal, QC, Canada
 Phone: +1 (514) 948-8005
 Contact Email: info@peripheria.ca

Co-Producer
 -

Estimated Budget (USD):
 3.6M
Financing Acquired:
 52,860

Financers:
 Development funds: SODEC
 (Canada), CALQ (Canada)

ELI JEAN TAHCHI

WRITER, DIRECTOR



Eli Jean Tahchi is a director, screenwriter, and actor. In Beirut, he studied cinema at the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts, earning a bachelor's degree in film and television production. In 2011, he moved to Montreal, where he pursued film studies at the Université de Montréal, and later graduated from the joint program funded by Netflix at the National Institute of Image and Sound (NIS).

Eli Jean Tahchi's socially engaged cinema is sharp, human, and metaphorically rich, frequently addressing LGBTQI+ themes and questions of identity. Since 2011, he has built a body of work spanning diverse genres and cultural perspectives, with films that have been awarded at festivals worldwide.

YANICK LÉTOURNEAU

PRODUCER



Yanick Létourneau is the lead producer and co-founder of Périphéria, known for bold, director-driven films with international reach. He is presenting "Infidels" at the Red Sea Souk, a new feature by Eli Jean Tahchi, and is developing "Dauclistan," an upcoming feature directed by Oscar-nominated Canadian filmmaker Ariel Nasr. His recent credits include Maxime Giroux's "In Cold Light" (2025), starring Maika Monroe, Troy Kotsur, and Helen Hunt; Jean-Claude Barry's "Fanon" (2025); Bruno Mourral's "Kidnapping Inc." (Sundance 2024); and Philippe Lacôte's "Night of the Kings" (Venice, TIFF, Sundance 2020). Létourneau specializes in cross-border financing and packaging, delivering uncompromising, auteur-driven films from greenlight to global release.

PIERRE VILLEPELET

PRODUCER



Pierre Villepelet is a Montréal-based emerging producer at Périphéria, a company whose films have premiered at Sundance, Venice, Berlinale, and TIFF. He develops cross-border co-production frameworks and connects creative and commercial partners to bring each project to life. His first feature as producer, Junna Chif's "Invisibles" (Tallinn Black Nights 2025), launches a slate of politically engaged cinema that challenges formal conventions. His second feature, "Infidels" (Red Sea Souk 2025), is his next major project, currently in packaging and financing.

Leg

Genre: Philosophical Drama
Country: Kazakhstan, Italy
Language: Uzbek
Status: In Development



AFilms.

Logline

Superstitious and terrified of death, Ulmas is determined to preserve his amputated leg, refusing to follow the Uzbek tradition of burying it with his future remains.

Synopsis

Ulmas, a 35-year-old laborer from a remote Uzbek village, loses his leg in a work accident. Tradition dictates that amputated limbs be buried with their owner's future remains, but Ulmas, terrified this will hasten his death, refuses. Pressured by his relatives and his uncle Ikram, the respected village chairman, Ulmas grows increasingly desperate.

Unable to work, he relies on his wife Iroda, who supports their twin daughters by taking informal jobs. Ulmas stores the leg in his friend Batyr's shop fridge, then seeks alternatives – honey, cold storage, even jars like those he sees at a school. Each failed attempt heightens family conflict and undermines Ikram's authority, as villagers question how a leader unable to control his own nephew can govern the entire community.

When Batyr finally reveals the leg's location, Ikram tries to end the ordeal, but Ulmas steals it back and flees to the mountains to mummify it. On the way, the leg is lost, leaving him devastated. Confronting the truth, Ulmas realizes it was not the leg but his fear that has weighed him down. At last, he lets go, turning toward his family and their future together.

Director's Intention

At the age of military conscription, I was diagnosed with an enlarged heart – much larger than normal. Until then, I had no idea, and the sudden news filled me with fear. From that day on, thoughts of death haunted me. I am afraid of dying. I don't know why, but I am. The moment I imagine my heart could stop at any time, I freeze.

Later, I heard that my neighbor preserved his amputated limb in honey rather than burying it – as tradition dictates – fearing that burial would hasten his death. I immediately connected with him; his story resonated deeply.

Through Ulmas' journey, I confront my own struggles and invite the audience to do the same. His leg is both literal and symbolic. We all carry burdens – guilt, grief, fear, unfulfilled dreams. This film is a call to face them, break free, and truly live.

Production Company

A Films
 Address: 46, Timiryazev str.,
 Almaty, Kazakhstan
 Phone: +77075037003
 Contact Email: afilmskz@gmail.com

Co-Producer

Paolo Maria Spina
 Company Name: Revolver
 Country: Italy

Estimated Budget (USD):

725,798

Financing Acquired:

 316,227

Financers:

A Films (Kazakhstan), Kongchak Studio APM Award (Cambodia), Ciclic Centre-Val de Loire Writing Grant (France), Center for the Development of National Cinematography (Uzbekistan), Revolver (Italy).

SHOKIR KHOLIKOV

WRITER, DIRECTOR



Shokir Kholikov is an award-winning writer and director from Uzbekistan. He earned his Master's degree in Film and TV Directing from the Uzbek State Institute of Arts and Culture in 2023. His short films have achieved international acclaim, receiving more than 40 awards worldwide.

His debut feature film, "Sunday," premiered at the Shanghai Film Festival, where it won the Asian New Talent Award for Best Film. It has since screened at numerous international festivals, collecting over 20 additional awards and securing distribution in multiple territories, including France.

His second feature project, "Leg," was selected for the CNC Cannes Central Asian Co-production Workshop 2024 and the PAS Nantes Workshop 2024, and received the Kongchak Studio Award at APM 2024 as well as a Writing Grant from Ciclic Centre-Val de Loire.

AIGERIM SATYBALDY

PRODUCER



Aigerim Satybaldy is a Kazakh producer and founder of A Films, a company dedicated to championing bold cinematic voices from Central Asia. Her current projects in development, including LEG by Shokir Kholikov and BIRDS FLY SOUTH by Shugyla Serzhan, have been selected for leading co-production and development platforms such as CNC Cannes, Busan's APM, PAS Nantes, and Alternativa Film Labs, and have won awards along the way. Aigerim also served as executive producer on the internationally acclaimed feature THE RIVER (2018) by Emir Baigazin, co-produced with Norway and Poland. The film received multiple awards at Venice, Toronto, and other major festivals. Aigerim is an alumna of both the Rotterdam Lab and the CHANEL x BIFF Asian Film Academy.

Nkanai

DEVELOPED BY THE RED SEA LABS

Genre: Survival Drama/African Neo-Western
Country: Kenya
Language: Maa, Swahili, English
Status: In Development



Logline

After a devastating injury leaves her paralyzed, Samburu's first female warrior rejects exile. With only a haunted tracker by her side, she braves northern Kenya's ruthless bandits, betrayal, and unforgiving terrain to reclaim her dignity and home.

Synopsis

Once a fearless Maasai moran, Nkanai loses the use of her legs after her cattle trample her when startled by a lion. Shunned by her father and sent to a rehabilitation center, she struggles against a life of pity and confinement. When her father abandons her completely, Kapel, a weary ex-bandit in exile, is tasked by the nuns running the rehabilitation center with escorting her to a remote shelter. But a violent turn of events forces them off their route, setting the unlikely pair on a perilous journey back to Nkanai's home through the harsh Samburu plains. Battling thirst, bandits, and their own broken spirits, Nkanai must rediscover her strength and dignity, proving that even without her legs, the spirit of a warrior never dies.

Director's Intention

"Nkanai" is a story about the spirit of a warrior, one that lives in the mind, not the body. After losing the use of her legs, Nkanai's battle shifts inward, from the fight for survival to the fight for self-worth. I want to explore how true strength can exist without movement, and how courage can manifest in stillness, silence, and choice. Visually, the film is a meditation on resilience and beauty. The Samburu plains will be captured through fluid, flowing camera movement, like breath and thought, countered by sharp, striking images that hold emotion in still frames. The palette will be colorful and rich, celebrating the texture of the land and the luminous depth of beautiful black skin under shifting light. My intention is to make a film that is visceral yet poetic, a cinematic ode to dignity, defiance, and the unbroken warrior within.

Production Company
 Jenga Visuals Limited
 Address: Kikuyu, Kiambu
 Phone: +254791248186
 Contact Email: audrey@jengavisuals.co.ke

Co-Producer
 -

Estimated Budget (USD):
 1,500,000
Financing Acquired:
 25,938

Financers:
 Payment Deferrals – Script Consultation from US Based Producer Lila Nordstom (Award by the Great Lakes Creative Producers Lab).

BRUNO TANYA

WRITER, DIRECTOR



Bruno Tanya is a Kenyan writer and director, and co-founder of Jenga Visuals, known for authentic, character-driven storytelling. He wrote the feature "Bobo," which premiered at the Joburg Film Festival, streamed on Showmax, and was selected for the 2025 Red Sea Film Lab's Lodge program, where he is developing "Nkanai."

He has written and directed three Showmax TV features — "Stinger," "Visasi," and "Two-Let" — which have been celebrated at the Kalasha, Mombasa, and Tanzanian Film Festivals. His earlier short films, "Talk of Me" and "Mr.125," received nominations at the Canex, Rwandan, and Eldoret Film Festivals.

Bruno is also developing "Caravan," a historical TV series set during the 1800s long-distance trade along the Kenyan coast. He aspires to be a leading voice in African cinema, creating films that reflect and connect our shared humanity.

AUDREY TANYA

PRODUCER



Audrey Restetuta Tanya is a Kenyan creative producer and co-founder of Jenga Visuals Ltd, based in Nairobi. She is dedicated to producing authentic African narratives that explore resilience, identity, and human transformation, with a particular focus on women's voices and underrepresented perspectives.

Her producing credits include "Visasi" (Showmax), winner of Best Lead Actor at the Mombasa International Film Festival; "My Little Warrior," a multi-award-nominated documentary; "Stinger," East Africa's first female-led boxing film; and "PAA" Season 4, an eight-episode TV series set to premiere on one of Kenya's leading broadcasters.

She is currently developing "Nkanai," a powerful feature exploring courage, identity, resilience, and the unbreakable spirit of a woman warrior. Audrey's vision is to shape globally resonant stories that strengthen Africa's cinematic legacy.

Philax

Genre: Comedy Drama
Country: Türkiye, Italy, Greece
Language: Greek, Turkish, Kurdish
Status: In Development



Gülta May.

Logline

On a remote island, a donkey named Philax moves from owner to owner, tracing four seasons of resistance, feasts, fear, and hope.

Synopsis

The greatest desire of the last 12 Greek elderly people living on a remote Aegean island in Turkey is to die in their homeland and be buried by their Priest. Crisis strikes after the sudden death of the Priest and the new military coup d'état that takes place in the country. Despite the uncertainties of the times, the elders decide to resist and hope not to die before their expected new Priest arrives. There is also a character at the core of unfolding events, a donkey named Philax.

Director's Intention

Peaceful coexistence remains an unresolved global issue, often leading to destructive outcomes such as forced migration. In Türkiye, one of the most deeply affected communities has been the Greek natives. Once numbering over a million, their population has declined to around 1,500 today. Despite their rich historical presence, they stand on the brink of extinction, with elders now serving as guardians of memory and tradition. Among them, the elders of Imbros island—whose profound attachment to their homeland endures—have been my inspiration for "Philax". Having engaged with the community for over two decades, I have witnessed their ability to embrace joy and celebration even in the face of decline. This paradox is where their resilience lies, and it allows me to shape "Philax" not as a story of loss but as one where life, hope, and joy continue to prevail.

Production Company
 Sarya Films Collective
 Address: Turnacı Basi Cad 21/4
 Beyoğlu, İstanbul, Türkiye
 Phone: +905427167503
 Contact Email: info@saryafilms.com

Co-Producer
 Company name: Stayblack,
 Horsefly
 Country: Italy, Greece

Company name: Karma Films
 Country: Turkey

Estimated Budget (USD):
 1,600,000
Financing Acquired:
 800,000

Financers:
 Calabria Film Fund (Italy), Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Türkiye), Anatolian House (Türkiye), Bir Film (Türkiye), LondonPost (Türkiye), Kulturakademie Tarabya (Germany), Göteborg Film Fund (Sweden).

RÜKEN TEKEŞ

WRITER,
 DIRECTOR,
 PRODUCER



Born in Diyarbakır, Turkey, Rüken Tekeş is a self-made filmmaker and former United Nations human rights expert. After working internationally as a lecturer and consultant, she turned to filmmaking in 2015, focusing on social and environmental issues. Her debut short "Hevêrk", nominated for the European Film Awards (2016), and feature documentary "Aether", premiered at Visions Du Reel (2019), have garnered multiple international awards. Tekeş's upcoming documentary "Ethnos" is in post-production, while her fiction feature "Philax" – selected for Cannes Film Festival's L'Atelier and the San Francisco Film Institute's Rainin – is currently in development. In addition to her own films, she has produced "Eksi Bir" by Ömer Ferhat Özmen, which premiered at Clermont-Ferrand ISFF (2024); and "Nena Sena" by Dino Omerović, which premiered at Sarajevo IFF (2025). Tekeş is an alumna of Kulturakademie Tarabya and a member of SE-YAP (Film Producers' Association of Turkey) and the European Film Academy since 2016.

YORGOS TSOURGIANNIS

PRODUCER



Yorgos Tsourgiannis is an independent film producer and the founder and managing director of the Athens-based production label Horsefly Films. He has produced and co-produced acclaimed films by directors such as Efthimis Kosemund Sanidis, Emin Alper, Michalis Konstantatos, Yiannis Veslemes, and Yorgos Lanthimos. His most recent co-production is Hana Jusić's "God Will Not Help," premiered at the Locarno Film Festival (2025). He is currently developing a slate of upcoming feature-length films by Efthimis Kosemund Sanidis, Emin Alper, Christiana Cheiranagnostaki, Athanasios Karanikolas, and Nikola Ljuca, among others. In addition to his production work, he teaches at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and collaborates regularly with international workshops and institutions as a script and production consultant. He has been a member of the ACE Producers Network since 2010, is an alumnus of EFP Producers on the Move, and a member of both the Hellenic and European Film Academies.

DILOY GULUN

CO-PRODUCER



Following her San Sebastian Film Festival Best Director win in 2001 for Boats Out of Watermelon Rinds, she founded Karma Films in 2003. Since then, she has serviced numerous international productions, including Charlie's Angels (Elizabeth Banks), Inferno (Ron Howard), Taken 2 (Olivier Megaton), The Reluctant Fundamentalist (Mira Nair), and The International (Tom Tykwer), alongside a wide range of documentaries and over 400 commercials.

As a producer, her credits include the 2018 Sundance Grand Jury Prize Winner Butterflies, the 2023 Sundance Audience Award Winner The Persian Version, and the 2022 Berlinale Panorama Winner Convenience Store. She also produced Between Two Dawns (San Sebastian premiere, Torino Best Film, 2021) and Hesitation Wound (Venice Film Festival Orizzonti premiere, 2023). Most recently, she co-produced Eagles of the Republic by Tarik Saleh, which competed for Palm D'or at Cannes Film Festival in 2025.

Playhouse

Genre: Drama
Country: Palestine, Germany, France, Cyprus
Language: Arabic, Hebrew, English
Status: In Development



Logline

A young Palestinian hides in his ancestral home in Jaffa, determined to reclaim a legacy erased by exile and loss.

Synopsis

Zayd (20), a Palestinian construction worker from Aida refugee camp, commutes daily to Tel Aviv for work, crossing checkpoints with a permit. Living with his parents and siblings in a cramped home, he became the family's breadwinner after his sister was martyred, which left his father in deep depression.

His family, exiled from Jaffa during the 1948 Nakba, has never forgotten their lost home. After his longtime girlfriend, Ahlam, leaves him, Zayd decides to secretly live in his great-grandfather's house in Jaffa, built in the 1930s. Living on the roof and hiding there, he watches the Israeli family living in the house and adapts his life to their rhythms.

From this roof, he observes the family: the parents, Rachel and Gal, and their son, Jonathan, a dysfunctional family still grieving their daughter's death and dealing with financial problems and massive debts. When Gal's elderly and senile father, Aaron, arrives to sign papers to sell the house, Zayd befriends him and tries to prevent the sale. Caught by police and deported back to his home, Zayd returns the next day through a hole in the separation wall, turning the roof into his "home."

Director's Intention

"Playhouse" is a meditation on memory, displacement, and resilience. Through Zayd's story, a young refugee reclaiming his family's lost home in Jaffa, I explore the exiled lives of Palestinians and the silent resistance embedded in their daily survival. The unfinished roof where Zayd hides becomes a metaphor for interrupted histories and unspoken longing. Visually, the film contrasts the suffocating confines of the Aida refugee camp with the haunting elegance of the old Jaffa house, embodying both loss and the yearning for return (Awda). The cinematography strictly follows Zayd's gaze, fragmented, partial, and intimate, immersing the viewer in his solitude and tension as an unseen observer. I aim to portray all characters, with complexity and humanity, avoiding caricature. Ultimately, "Playhouse" is a story of reclamation, of home, memory, and identity, and a tribute to those who can never return.

Production Company
 Pallas Film GmbH
 Mansfelder Str. 56, 06108 Halle (Saale),
 Germany
 +49 345 6787 323
 office@pallasfilm.de

Still Moving
 274 bd Raspail, 75014 Paris, France
 jepoutre@stillmoving.fr

AMP Filmworks
 4 Agias Elenis, 1060 Nicosia, Cyprus
 info@filmworks.com.cy

Fresco Films
 Ajami, Yafa, Palestine
 tony@frescofilms.com

Co-Producer

–

Estimated Budget (USD):

2,100,00

Financing Acquired:
 435,000

Financers:

Producer's Investments, MDM
 (public fund, development support)
 (Germany), CIPA (tax rebate,
 automatic) (Cyprus).

MAHA HAJ

WRITER, DIRECTOR



Maha Haj is a Palestinian filmmaker renowned for her poignant and subtly political storytelling. She began her career as a set designer and art director before directing acclaimed films such as "Oranges" and "Personal Affairs". Her debut feature "Personal Affairs" premiered at Cannes in 2016, earning numerous awards including Best Feature at Haifa and a Special Mention at Zurich. Her second feature, "Mediterranean Fever," won the Screenplay Prize at Cannes 2022, marking another success in her career. Haj's films highlight Palestinian life with wit and depth, garnering international recognition. In 2024, Haj released the short film "Upshot," a moving drama that won the Pardino d'Oro for Best Auteur Short at Locarno and the Audience Award at Clermont-Ferrand.

THANASSIS KARATHANOS

PRODUCER



Thanassis Karathanos founded the film production company "Twenty Twenty Vision" in Berlin and in 2003, "Pallas Film" in Halle (Saale). He produced and co-produced award-winning films such as the Oscar-nominated films "Ajami," "The Man Who Sold His Skin," and "Four Daughters." He is a member of the European and German Film Academies and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS). His filmography includes internationally acclaimed works such as "Irina Palm" (Sam Garbarski), "The Drummer" (Kenneth Branagh), "Clouds of Sils Maria" (Olivier Assayas), "Ma Loute" (Bruno Dumont), "Ele" (Paul Verhoeven), "Centaur" (Aktan Arym Kubat), "Ayka" (Sergey Dvortsevov), "It Must Be Heaven" (Ela Suleiman), "The Gravedigger's Wife" (Khadar Ayderus Ahmed), "Mariupolis 2" (Mantas Kvederavicius), "Mediterranean Fever" (Maha Haj), and most recently "All That's Left of You" (Cherien Dabis), "Orphan" (Lázlo Nemes), and "Hen" (György Pálfi).

Positive

DEVELOPED BY THE RED SEA LABS

Genre: Drama
Country: Saudi Arabia, USA
Language: Arabic
Status: In Development



Logline

When a routine blood test reveals that he's HIV positive, a Saudi man and his fiancée embark on a search for a cure, only to discover that true healing means something else.

Synopsis

In present-day Jeddah, Hamed, a charming male nurse in his early thirties from Taif, is engaged to Faiza, a divorcee who is ten years older than him. She is an ambitious female surgeon from a prominent Hejazi family. In preparation for their wedding, routine pre-marital bloodwork delivers a shocking diagnosis, Hamed is HIV positive. While marriage to a non-HIV partner is legal in Saudi Arabia, it is socially taboo. This disrupts their wedding plans. Hamed struggles to accept this new reality as he obsessively fixates on finding a way to cure himself. While Faiza is somewhat concerned about what her family will think, she suggests he consider a Swiss drug trial in Europe. However, Hamed chooses the alternative medicine route that takes them on a 3-week journey of bee-sting therapy and spiritual awakening trekking through Medina and the green mountains to Mecca. While Hamed and Faiza race the clock to find a cure before their wedding, they realize their bond runs deep, but not in the way they once thought.

Director's Intention

In Saudi Arabia, reputation isn't an image; it's survival. It decides what doors open, what bonds hold, what future you're allowed. Reputation can outrank truth. Outrank health. Outrank everyday life. "Society's reaction... is the worst," says Dr. Nizar Bahabri of King Faisal. Cases are rising not from recklessness, he warns, but fear, people are too afraid to get tested. In our daily lives, we do private calculations of how much do I reveal? What part of me is safe? What stays mine? In this story, authenticity is important but sometimes it's blending in to stay alive. Sometimes it's stepping out and paying the price. Both are real. Both are brave. Vision 2030 says we're ready for something new. But change isn't cosmetic; it's personal, layered, and still risky. What does healing look like where reputation outruns vulnerability? When do we decide that the performance ends and life begins?

Production Company
 263 Reels Productions
 Address: 2219 W Olive Ave, Suite
 158, Burbank, CA 91505, USA
 Phone: +1 678-571 -1096
 Contact Email: lydiasue.ellen@
 gmail.com

Co-Producer
 -

Estimated Budget (USD):
 1,291,837
Financing Acquired:
 0

Financers:
 N/A

HANAA SALEH ALFASSI

WRITER, DIRECTOR



Hanaa is a writer-director and producer with 20+ years of experience across different mediums. Credits include producer of an animated short documentary that screened at the Annecy International Animation Film Festival; winner of Best Unproduced Screenplay at the Saudi Film Festival; funding recipient from the Malmö Arab Film Festival Development Fund. A TV pilot developed at the Red Sea Series Lab earned the lab's award and selection to pitch at Series Mania. Alumna of the Rawi Screenwriters Lab, a collaboration between Sundance Institute and Med Film Factory at the Royal Film Commission, Jordan. Her short, "When the Shelves Hymn" won ALUJA Creates and was an official selection at Oscar and BIFA-qualifying film festivals. Hanaa is currently developing the feature film "Positive" through The Red Sea Lodge.

HANAA HIJAZI

CO-WRITER



Hanaa Hijazi is a Saudi writer, novelist, and visual artist, as well as a retired physician. The author of six published books, she participated in the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa in 2009. Since 2017, she has written a weekly column for Al-Riyadh newspaper and served as a jury member for the Saudi Film Festival's screenplay competition in 2022. Her works, translated into several languages, have represented Saudi Arabia at cultural and literary events in Egypt, Austria, and Germany.

SUE-ELLEN CHITUNYA

PRODUCER



Sue-Ellen Chitunya is a producer who hails from Zimbabwe. She is a member of The Academy and a Roger and Chaz Ebert Fellow. She is an alumna of Film Independent Amplifier, WIF Emerging Producers, and Rotterdam Lab. Her projects have been selected and awarded at Durban FilmMart, Red Sea Lodge, and SFFILM. Her shorts have screened at festivals around the world including Rotterdam, BFI London, and Tribeca.

Her varied work experience includes programming for Zimbabwe, Atlanta, and Slamdance Film Festivals; serving as Post-Production Coordinator on Marvel Studios' "Avengers: Endgame" (2019) and "Avengers: Infinity War" (2018); and Junior Executive on "This Is Us" (Seasons 5 & 6) and "Only Murders in the Building" (Seasons 1 & 2). She recently produced the documentary "For Tomorrow" (2022), available on Amazon Prime, and the interactive rom-com "Mr. Right" (2022).

Price of Evil

DEVELOPED BY THE RED SEA LABS

Genre: Drama (Live Action)
Country: Norway, Sudan
Language: Norwegian, Sudanese Arabic
Status: In Development



Anie Weider.

Logline

When his grandfather is murdered in Sudan, Norwegian-Sudanese Ahmed must decide the killer's punishment according to Sudanese law: prison, forgiveness or the death penalty. We follow him as he faces an impossible decision with enormous consequences for himself and his family.

Synopsis

Norwegian-Sudanese Ahmed is a principled young man working at a human rights NGO in Oslo. When he was a child, his Sudanese father died; since then, his grandfather, Abdelrahim, has become his father figure and his main connection to Sudan.

When Abdelrahim is suddenly murdered in Sudan, the tragedy is unbearable. Ahmed travels to the funeral and, amid the sorrow, is shocked again: the killer has confessed. Under Sudanese law, as the guardian of the blood, Ahmed must decide the punishment: prison and blood money, forgiveness and reconciliation, or the death penalty.

At first, Ahmed resists deciding another person's fate, but to honor his Sudanese family and his grandfather, he must face this impossible, life-defining dilemma. Will he take the familiar path and choose prison and blood money? Will he follow his principles of humanitarianism and the court's recommendation to forgive and reconcile? Or will he succumb to his rising grief and rage and choose the death penalty?

Director's Intention

The main character in my film is a principled human rights activist, who's against the death penalty. But what happens when the person he loves the most is murdered, and he gets the power to decide the killer's punishment? Ahmed faces a paradox I've struggled with: My ideals and principles are certain—if I have a safe distance. But when distance is removed, my certainty vanishes. The film explores this paradox and is not only interested in the verdict, but in the trap of unwanted power and its consequences. What does complexity do to a person who's always seen the world in black and white terms? By observing how the decision reshapes Ahmed, I intend to invite honest reflection: Which principle are you most afraid to test, and what happens when you must?

Production Company
 Vitri Pictures
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 Oslo
 Phone: +45 50 92 19 81
 Contact Email: jonas@vitripictures.
 no

Co-Producer
 -

Estimated Budget (USD):
 2,200,000
Financing Acquired:
 50,000

Financers:
 The Norwegian Film Institute,
 Norway

IBRAHIM MURSAL

WRITER, DIRECTOR



Ibrahim Mursal is a Norwegian-Somali-Sudanese filmmaker known for exploring identity through a bold yet thoughtful lens.

His acclaimed debut documentary *The Art of Sin* (2020) gained international attention and awards, followed by short films like "Connections and Set-Pieces". In 2024, his first fiction short film "African Family Dinner" premiered to critical praise, including at Tribeca Festival and Red Sea International Film Festival. In addition to developing his first feature film, Mursal lectures widely and works as a film advisor at the human rights organization IPPF Norway, using film to open dialogue on complex social issues.

JONAS BRUUN

PRODUCER



Originally trained as an anthropologist, Jonas Bruun has a background in documentary working in production with many of the foremost filmmakers in Danish documentary films, also directing the documentary feature *Humanity on Trial* (Audience Award Winner at Nordisk Panorama). In 2022 he graduated as a fiction film producer from The Norwegian Film School. For the past three years, alongside Louise Beyer, he established and ran the talent branch "Skala" at Storm Films focusing on debut features and series. They also produced five short films, including *Poor Me*, which was nominated for a Norwegian Academy Award for Best Short Film. In 2025 he started his own production company Vitri Pictures where he will continue producing projects with high artistic quality and attention to audience, but also focus more on international co-production. Bruun also teaches as a guest lecturer at the most prominent film schools in Norway.

Salma and the Moon and the Stars

DEVELOPED BY THE RED SEA LABS

Genre: Fantasy
Country: Saudi Arabia
Language: Arabic
Status: In Development



Logline

Jealous of her perfect older sister, an 11-year-old girl makes a reckless wish for a fairytale villain to take her sister away, only to watch it come true. Now, she must journey through a realm of jinn and magic to rescue her sister, undo her mistake, and discover the power of her own imagination.

Synopsis

On the eve of Eid, imaginative young Salma feels endlessly overshadowed by her older sister Ghazal, the graceful daughter everyone praises. Frustrated after being scolded once too often, Salma makes a furious wish: for the villain of her storybook, the sorcerer Oud Al Shadaab, to take Ghazal away. To her shock, the wish comes true. Ghazal disappears, their family falls under a sleeping spell, and only Salma and her grandmother, Sitto Hind, remain awake. Sitto reveals a mysterious connection to Oud Al Shadaab and entrusts Salma with a mission: journey into his enchanted realm to rescue Ghazal.

Salma ventures into a magical world filled with mystical creatures, ancient tribes, and hidden dangers. She meets Tamim, a rebellious desert boy, and Boaboa, a gentle creature once bound to Oud Al Shadaab. Salma discovers her drawings can reshape reality, but Oud Al Shadaab seeks her magic for revenge against Sitto. Meanwhile, Ghazal embraces the darkness, becoming the queen of Oud Al Shadaab's realm.

In a climactic showdown, the sisters confront one another, uncovering their truths and forgiving each other. Together, they summon their unique powers, break the spell, free Oud Al Shadaab from his role as the villain in Sitto's stories, and return home. As Eid dawns, life seems unchanged, yet magic lingers – and Salma has become the heroine of her own story.

Director's Intention

I grew up listening to my grandmother's fairytales – part of the undocumented Hijazi oral tradition. This film celebrates the magic she conjured, not just through her stories, but through the warmth of her voice and the liminal space between reality and imagination. It honors the wisdom of matriarchs like her, whose stories shape our inner worlds. At its heart, the film explores the complex bond between my sister and me, an intimate, beautiful, yet fraught relationship that reflects common family dynamics across the Arab world and beyond. It also represents my love for the fantasy genre, still largely untapped in Saudi cinema, especially for children aged 8–12. Fantasy has the power to inspire deep emotional connection, iconic characters, and enduring worlds. Saudi heritage is rich with magical lore waiting to be rediscovered. Through fantasy, powerful visuals, and the timeless hero's journey, this film aims to awaken wonder in a new generation.

Production Company
Farah Jouni (Independent
Producer)
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Phone: +966555123831
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Co-Producer
–

Estimated Budget (USD):
6,000,000
Financing Acquired:
0

Financers:
N/A

MARAM TAIBAH

WRITER, DIRECTOR



A Saudi film director, screenwriter, and children's fantasy author based in Jeddah. She wrote and directed three short films, most recently the acclaimed "Malika", her first fantasy project, funded by Film AlUla's prestigious "AlUla Creates" program. "Malika" won the Qayqub Award for Best Short Film at the Arab Toronto Film Festival and was nominated at both the Red Sea International Film Festival and the Sharjah International Festival for Children and Youth. The film now serves as a proof of concept for her debut fantasy feature, currently in development.

Maram's storytelling was driven by a lifelong fascination with fantasy. She's the author of "Weathernose", a steampunk fantasy novella for middle-grade readers (ages 8–12) and the first installment in the Cerulean Universe Series. Passionate about nurturing creativity, Maram has mentored writers across Saudi Arabia through workshops, online programs, and one-to-one coaching. She's dedicated to helping authors and screenwriters believe in their voices.

FARAH JOUNI

PRODUCER



Born in Jeddah with Lebanese roots, she carries a deep connection to culture and Saudi cinema. Her path began in 2012 as co-founder of "We The Loft", part of the Kingdom's first wave of audiovisual art, and she has grown alongside the industry as it reclaimed its place on the world stage. In 2021, she joined the inaugural Red Sea International Film Festival and later served as development producer on the award-winning "The Last Dismissal." She also produced "Malika," which won Best Short at the Arab Toronto Film Festival and was nominated at Red Sea International Film Festival and the Saudi Film Festival. Today, she leads distribution at Telfaz11 Studios, shaping theatrical releases and streaming strategies across Saudi Arabia, while continuing to produce independent films rooted in Arab stories of transformation, told with honesty and resonance.

Spaceman in Kongo

Genre: Hybrid Documentary
Country: DR Congo, UK, Germany
Language: French, Lingala
Status: In Development



Logline

Two young rocket engineers, propelled by the memory of African dreamers and a resilient belief in their homeland, work on building the first Congolese space program.

Synopsis

"Spaceman in Kongo" follows three generations in the evolving quest for an African space program. Two young engineering students, Nestor and Isaac, have journeyed from Eastern Congo to Kinshasa to build a rocket. Their mentor, Jean-Patrice Keka, a charismatic Congolese engineer, has spent two decades crafting rockets from salvaged parts, undeterred by scepticism and stalled government support. Hovering between past and present is Edward Mukuka, the 1960s Zambian "Afronaut" who dreamed of sending Africans to Mars. For Nestor and Isaac, part of a new Congolese generation who have watched global powers feed on their country's resources, space represents a chance to reclaim technology. What Keka and Mukuka share, and strive to impart to the students, is a decolonised mindset. For them building a rocket isn't just about reaching space but reclaiming self-determination and igniting a shared sense of possibility.

For Nestor and Isaac, this conviction doesn't come easily. Around them, Kinshasa roils and corruption plagues the government. Back home, war rages, threatening their families. Keka's workshop, and the small crew of dedicated engineers, seems both inspiring and enigmatic. Meanwhile, Mukuka drifts through the city, seeking those who carry on his dream, demonstrating that true liberation begins in the mind.

Director's Intention

"Spaceman in Kongo" traces an African dream of aerospace carried across generations. Born in Eastern Congo, I've long been shaped by questions surrounding mineral exploitation and the futures of local communities excluded from these resources. Concerns that define my artistic journey, explored symbolically in my earlier short films at the crossroads of fiction and documentary.

My creative vision draws from Afrofuturism, a movement envisioning African emancipation by blending technological imagination with ancestral stories, in a dialogue between past, present, and future. A lens through which my protagonists' ambitions become both personal and generational.

Motivated by Mukuka and Keka's dream of space, young people like Nestor and Isaac want to contribute. As a fellow Eastern Congolese, I share Nestor and Isaac's determination to reshape perceptions of our region and it's my way to contribute to their vision-building. Like them, I'm part of Congo's next generation, on the mission to generate self-belief.

Production Company
 Maene Film Productions
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 Ngaliema, Kinshasa, DR Congo
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Production Company
 Leo Nelki Productions
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 Email: hello@leonelki.com

Black Forest Films GmbH
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 Berlin
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Co-Producer

-

Estimated Budget (USD):
 496,026
Financing Acquired:
 138,955

Financers:
 Sundance Sandbox Fund (USA),
 IDFA Bertha Fund (Netherlands),
 Ford Foundation (USA), Hot Docs
 Blue Ice Fund (Canada), Brot für die
 Welt (EZEZ) (Germany), British Art
 & Design Association (UK).

MAISHA MAENE

WRITER, DIRECTOR



Maisha Maene is a Congolese writer, director and producer. As an Afrofuturist artist, he works on issues of human rights and environment. Alongside various collaborative projects, Maisha has written and directed five short films. His most recent short "Mulika" won the Medien Patent AG Award at Locarno Film Festival 2022, Best Sound Design at Dresden Short Film Festival 2023, Best Film and Best Cinematography at FICKIN' Film Festival Kinshasa. "Mulika" was selected at Sundance Film Festival, Clermont Ferrand and FESPACO among many others. His fiction feature project "Niobium" was selected for Locarno Residency 2023. Maisha was selected for Berlinale Talents 2023, and for Berlinale Doc Station with his feature documentary "Spaceman in Kongo".

LEO NELKI

CO-WRITER &
 PRODUCER



Leo Nelki is producer and editor of Maisha Maene's short film "Mulika" (Locarno, Sundance, Clermont Ferrand among others). He has worked closely with Maisha since co-directing the short film APA. He co-produced the short documentary Lobi Ekosimba (2024, directed by Eli Maene). In 2024, he was selected for the BFI Doc Society RISE program for emerging UK producers. Currently Leo is in late production directing his feature debut, a documentary hybrid titled "Sunday in Japan" and was recently granted the Doc Society RAD fund for a new project in early research, titled Mouthful of River.

JOSUNE HAHNHEISER

PRODUCER



Josune Hahnheiser is Producer of Black Forest Films, a company that stands for high quality international films. The company has a long experience in international co-productions in many parts of the world. Black Forest Film's work is characterized by award-winning international productions that are regularly presented at renowned international film festivals such as Cannes, Venice, Berlin and others, covering a wide range of genres and budgets. Josune Hahnheiser is also a script consultant and writer.

Street Education

DEVELOPED BY THE RED SEA LABS

Genre: Dark Comedy, Coming of Age
Country: Saudi Arabia
Language: Arabic
Status: In Development

Production Company
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 com

Co-Producer
 -

Estimated Budget (USD):
 2,233,216.67
Financing Acquired:
 0

Financers:
 N/A



YASER B.

WRITER, DIRECTOR



Yaser B. is a Saudi filmmaker whose work explores youth, identity, and the societal pressures that shape them. A graduate of USC and BFI on Saudi Film Commission scholarships, he co-directed the award winning feature Junoon (2021), which premiered at the Red Sea International Film Festival and later streamed on Netflix. His short also won the prestigious Wai regional award. Yaser has also directed major commercial campaigns, including Award winning films for Riyadh Season. He was selected for the Red Sea SeriesLab, developing a dark comedy crime series with leading international mentors, and is currently developing his feature through the Red Sea Lodge. Yaser also got selected in the Red Sea Directors' Program, where he was mentored by Spike Lee through one-on-one sessions and masterclasses.

AMAL ALSEANAN

PRODUCER



Amal is a Saudi producer and Penn State graduate with degrees in Film & Video and Industrial Engineering. Her international background and engineering mindset shape her creative approach. She began her career in Los Angeles distribution before joining major Hollywood productions in Atlanta with studios such as Disney, Marvel, HBO, and AppleTV+. After returning to Saudi Arabia, she worked with clients including NEOM, SMO, Toyota, Abbott and Getty Images across films and commercials. Amal is currently developing a feature at the Red Sea Film Lodge and has financed films supported by Red Sea and Doha Film Institute.

Logline

Riyadh, 2018. When her sister gets blackmailed, Amal decides she'll fix it herself. Her only lead: Rakan, a street kid who mostly wants her Snapchat. He agrees to help, they cook up a trap for the blackmailer... and obviously everything goes wrong.

Synopsis

Riyadh, 2018. In an underground party, Rakan (20) full time drifter, part time charmer, crosses paths with two sisters, Amal and Dana. When a man films Dana without her knowing, Amal drags her sister out and snatches his phone on the way. The phone's locked, but what's on it could destroy their family's reputation. Rakan helps them escape, then disappears without a number.

Soon the blackmail calls begin. Amal can't go to her family or the police, and she's running out of time. Amal has one plan: find Rakan, the only idiot who can get her to whoever's holding the video. Her search drags her into Riyadh's night streets, bribing the family driver for keys, pulling stunts to grab attention, while Rakan's out cruising with his boys, acting like he's just chasing girls, and not thinking about her.

They link back up. Amal wants her sister safe. Rakan wants, for once, to matter. They set up a fake party at the only place available, a villa owned by Rakan's friend's dad, a religious sheikh. The plan is simple: bait the blackmailer, record proof, but then a DJ blasts the invite everywhere, wrong people pour in, and the night blows up.

Director's Intention

Set in 2018, when Saudi youth were caught between tradition and sudden change, I wanted to capture the year I spent mostly on the streets: the contradictions, mistakes, and a freedom that felt thrilling and dangerous. This film looks past the rush of night life to the "street education" you get when there's no one else to ask. Many hard choices can't be taken to family; you lean on friends or random strangers who often make it messier. Through Rakan and Amal, I'm asking simple, real questions: What finally pushes a young man who could keep drifting to choose purpose and responsibility? And what drives a young woman to go past her limits—solving it in secret—because family rules are tight and the situation is too sensitive to expose? I'm also exploring the unspoken romance in a culture where intimacy is often hidden, how a quiet connection can spark in the middle of chaos. The film stays close to that fragile line where humor, danger, and hope mix, watching a generation test its limits and invent its own education in curiosity, maturity, loyalty, love, and survival.

The Daughter

DEVELOPED BY THE RED SEA LABS

Genre: Drama, Horror, Fantasy
Country: Hong Kong, Taiwan, France
Language: Chinese
Status: In Production



Logline

In a population crisis, a teenage village girl is forced into pregnancy, only to discover the fetus inside her is a vengeful spirit, longing to be reborn through her body—yet, they share an intimate and inexplicable bond.

Synopsis

In a remote mountain village, the government's pro-birth program drives families to have children in exchange for rewards. Sixteen-year-old Gui is forced into pregnancy after her mother loses the ability to conceive. Soon, terrifying visions begin to haunt her, and her body no longer feels her own. Gui believes she is carrying an evil spirit from an ancient legend. But her mother, Yishui—the only person she trusts—insists these are merely pregnancy symptoms. Yet Gui senses something sinister—an unsettling hunger in her mother's eyes.

Gui tries to escape her mother and the village, but fails. As more pregnant women begin to suffer strange fates, Gui gradually uncovers an extraordinary and intimate connection with the spirit. Behind its vengeful longing for rebirth lies Yishui's deepest pain and a terrifying, unsettling history.

Director's Intention

In recent years, birth rates have been falling sharply worldwide, especially in China. In response, the government has introduced pro-birth policies to encourage families to have more children—but they have had little effect. Ironically, before 2015, China was still enforcing the One-Child Policy. During that time, deep-rooted preference for boys led to countless baby girls being aborted or abandoned—the so-called "missing girls."

This history haunts me. If the crisis worsens, could today's birth-reward policies one day turn into another form of control? And have the wounds left by the One-Child Policy truly healed—or are they merely buried?

Through this film, I explore how politics and tradition can infiltrate our bodies and lives, creating confusion and despair. More importantly, it's a story about a mother and daughter, trapped by the opposite birth policies. They share the same reproductive trauma, but cannot truly understand each other, bound by silence and guilt.

Production Company
 Uluka Studio Limited
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Co-Producer
 Flash Forward Entertainment
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Altamar Films
 16, Meslay St. 75003 Paris, France
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Estimated Budget (USD):
 1,200,000
Financing Acquired:
 120,000

Financers:
 Uluka Studio Limited (Hong Kong)

TIAN GUAN

WRITER, DIRECTOR



Tian Guan is a writer and director based in Beijing. He earned his MFA degrees in film production from Syracuse University and California Institute of the Arts. He is also an alumni of Talents Tokyo 25'. His latest short film "The Poison Cat" premiered at the 81st Venice Film Festival and has been released on Canal+. Other short films have screened or been awarded at festivals such as Warsaw, Moscow, Gijon, Stockholm, Leeds, Palm Springs, Santa Barbara, ShortShorts, ZINEBI, Slamdance, Rio de Janeiro, Alexandria, Jogja, Pingyao, etc. "The Daughter" was selected for the Red Sea Labs, Asian Project Market (Busan) and TCOF, winning three awards at HongKong HAF.

VIVIAN BAO

MAIN PRODUCER,
 CO-WRITER



Vivian Bao graduated from CalArts and was selected for Shanghai SIFF Next and the EAVE TTB Asia-Europe Producers Workshop. Her producing and co-production credits include films selected by Venice, Locarno, Moscow, and Warsaw. Development projects have been selected for Rotterdam CineMart, Hong Kong HAF, BIFAN NAFF, Red Sea Lab and Busan APM.

To Catch a Falling Sky

DEVELOPED BY THE RED SEA LABS

Genre: Historical Drama, War, Family, Romance
Country: Nigeria, UK
Language: English, Igbo
Status: In Production



Production Company
 Igodo Films
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 Ademola Adetokunbo, Victoria
 Island, Lagos
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 7398 542308
 Contact Email:
 igodofilmsandmediaco@gmail.
 com, sheila.nortley@gmail.com

Co-Producer
 -

Estimated Budget (USD):
 2,000,000
Financing Acquired:
 N/A

Financers:
 N/A

CHETA CHUKWU

WRITER, DIRECTOR



Cheta Chukwu is a Nigerian writer and director, best known for his breakout feature "Payday". The whip-smart crime comedy had a successful theatrical run across Africa before its acquisition by Netflix and Prime Video. His writing credits include the socially charged thriller "Wives on Strike: The Uprising" (2024), which earned multiple Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Award nominations, and the international action thriller "Not for Sale". His romantic comedy "Strawberry Chiny" was an official selection at the 2024 Essence Film Festival. Cheta's directorial work expanded with Adam Bol, a pioneering Kazakhstan-Nigeria co-production shot between both countries. He is committed to championing strong female characters and underrepresented communities, using cinema to share the power of African stories.

SHEILA NORTLEY

PRODUCER



Sheila Nortley is a London-based producer working across international film and television. She most recently produced Netflix's BAFTA TV-nominated hit "Supacell", which also won a 2025 BAFTA Craft Award. Her other credits include the global Netflix hit "Stay Close", starring Cush Jumbo and Richard Armitage. As a director, she has helmed "I Am Mary" for Sky and the BFI, along with acclaimed shorts. With projects in development for BBC Films and the BFI, she champions Afrofuturism and underrepresented voices as an Associate Fellow of the Royal Commonwealth Society.

Logline

In 1966 Nigeria, as civil war erupts, a brilliant but childless woman must confront her husband's devastating choice to bring home a second wife, forcing her to choose between resentment and an unthinkable alliance as their country collapses around them.

Synopsis

Obiageri is a proud, intelligent Igbo woman married to Nzeribe, a respected journalist in 1960s Nigeria. Their happy marriage is strained by years of childlessness. Bowing to familial pressure, Nzeribe brings home Kesandu, a young village girl, as a second wife to secure an heir, shattering Obiageri's security and their home's foundation.

Determined to assert her place, Obiageri initially makes Kesandu's life difficult. But as tensions simmer, her feelings shift and the two women form an unlikely bond. Beyond their walls, Nigeria fractures. Civil war brews as mass killings of Igbos erupt in the North. The conflict seeps into their home, reshaping loyalties, deepening rifts, and unraveling their illusion of peace.

As each woman confronts her own struggle with love, motherhood, and identity, they are drawn together by shared grief, betrayal, and war's brutal realities. Obiageri becomes both witness and victim to a sudden tragedy that threatens to upend everything.

Faced with a nation she no longer recognizes and a home that no longer belongs to her, she must confront the limits of the life she built and truths too painful to speak.

Director's Intention

My film, "To Catch a Falling Sky", is a deeply personal exploration of how love fractures and reforms within a polygamous family in 1960s Nigeria, as a nation's violent divorce forces a husband and his two wives to reforge their identities and allegiances. At its core, this is a visceral meditation on womanhood and nationhood at a breaking point. Inspired by the silenced stories of women like my mother and the unresolved legacy of the Biafran War — the civil conflict that nearly tore Nigeria apart — I am drawn to the spaces where history intrudes on the home, where survival, intimacy, and love become acts of resistance. This film is my attempt to capture the cost of holding onto humanity when both the country and the family are falling apart.

Unholy

DEVELOPED BY THE RED SEA LABS

Genre: Drama
Country: Indonesia
Language: Indonesian
Status: In Development



Logline

In a secluded Islamic boarding school, Fahri's camera lingers on his best friend's sleeping face. When his secret is exposed, he finds solace in a teacher's gentle attention — until tenderness turns uneasy, and innocence folds into something harder to name.

Synopsis

Fahri and his best friend Jejen are inseparable at their Islamic boarding school; a word of early prayers, memorizing Qur'an verses, and quiet companionship. They share meals, laughter, and whispered conversations after lights-out. In this enclosed world, where affection is rarely spoken, Fahri's feelings for Jejen begin to deepen into something he doesn't have words for.

He starts to crave Jejen's presence and attention. Late at night, Fahri photographs Jejen as he sleeps, capturing him like a work of art. But when the photos are discovered, their bond shatters. What Fahri calls admiration, Jejen names violation. Fahri is left adrift in guilt and confusion, questioning whether his longing itself is wrong.

Amid isolation, Fahri is drawn to Zakaria, a charismatic teacher admired by many. Through lessons in calligraphy and Sufi dance, Zakaria opens a quiet space where Fahri feels seen and understood. Yet as their closeness grows, the line between care and something else begins to blur; a hand lingers too long, words spoken too soft. Fahri is pulled into a current that he is too innocent to navigate.

A question he once addressed to Jejen now hits him back like a sharp arrow: is it wrong to be admired?

Director's Intention

My three years at an Islamic boarding school, starting at twelve, left me with fragmented memories and questions that still linger. I remember being overwhelmed by emotions I couldn't name: affection, the need to be seen, the longing for closeness. Yet in that world, even asking those questions felt forbidden. With Unholy, I want to explore the fragile line between friendship, admiration, and desire, and how affection can quietly turn into something more complicated in a place ruled by silence. This is not a story of judgment, but one of ambiguity, the beauty of intimacy and the unease of transgression. Visually, the film takes a personal and intimate approach. Close-up shots and tight framing reveal Fahri's small gestures and expressions, while natural light and soft colors reflect his emotional weight. Silent moments and empty spaces invite reflection and show his confusion and isolation. At its heart, "Unholy" is about the unspoken emotions of adolescence, about longing, confusion, and the silence that shapes who we become.

Production Company
 Kawankawan Media
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 12820
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 kawankawan.media

Co-Producer
 -

Estimated Budget (USD):
 452,234
Financing Acquired:
 90,446.8

Financers:
 Kawankawan Media (Indonesia),
 Ministry of Creative Economy
 (Indonesia).

M. REZA FAHRIYANSYAH

DIRECTOR



His short film "Rest in Peace" was selected in Clermont-Ferrand film festival 2019, World Cinema Amsterdam Film Festival 2019, and Jogja-NETPAC Asian Film Festival 2018. His latest short film "Dancing Color" premiered in Locarno International Film Festival, Pardi di Domani 2022. Selected in QCinema IFF 2022, Hanoi IFF 2022, JAFF 2022, Tampere IFF 2023 and won as best short film in Festival Film Indonesia 2022.

SOFIA LO

WRITER



She has worked as a commercial writer for ads and blockbuster movies since 2012. Now, she is focusing on her career as an independent screenwriter. She has (co-)written several short films such as "Secret Holiday" (third winner of ACCFEST 2020, Dir: Erlangga Radhikza), "Golden Age" (produced by Palari Films, Dir: Reza Fahriyansyah), and "Dancing Colors" (premiered and competed in Locarno Film Festival 2022, Dir: Reza Fahriyansyah). Currently, she is developing feature-length scripts with Reza Fahriyansyah titled "Unholy" and with Nimdi Raras titled "Frame of Sally".

AMERTA KUSUMA

PRODUCER



Co-founder of Kawankawan Media, a production company based in Jakarta Indonesia. Produced the short film "On the Origin of Fear" (Venice IFF 2016, Toronto IFF 2016, Busan IFF 2016) by Bayu Prihantoro Filemon; and the feature documentary "You and I" by Fanny Chotimah, which won the Asian Perspective Award DMZ International Documentary FF and Next:Wave Award winner in CPH:DOX 2021. In addition to "Tale of the Land" by Loeloe Hendra, which premiered in Busan IFF 2024 and won the FIPRESCI award. Lately served as minority co-producer in "Renoir" by Chie Hayakawa, which competed in the 2025 Cannes IFF.

Veil Whispers

DEVELOPED BY THE RED SEA LABS

Genre: Drama, Supernatural
Country: China, USA
Language: Chinese
Status: In Development



Logline

Reimagining the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, a Chinese mother descends to the underworld to rescue her son after he committed suicide—only to find her quest is a reckoning with generational control and the forgiveness she must earn.

Synopsis

After her adolescent son Ming committed suicide, Liu submits to a perilous Taoist ritual that frees her soul to enter the Underworld. Granted one chance by the Underworld King, she must reach his realm on foot and pass three trials—remain steadfast, perform acts of kindness, and prove motherhood through deeds—to bring Ming home.

Along the way, Liu joins a swaggering theater master and his two disabled apprentices, a girl who died from abortion complications, and a ferryman's timid wife who longs to escape. Shadow hounds, the River of Oblivion, and soul-swallowing fog test them.

Though Liu plays a selfless maternal leader, the journey slowly lifts her mask. Her "good deeds" tilt into commands, revealing the control she learned from her own mother—what scared her then later scared Ming, ultimately resulting in his death. At last, the King allows Ming to follow Liu back only if she walks ahead and never looks back. Near the threshold of life, Ming forces Liu to face her denial. Liu finally realizes that in order to break the cycle of control, she needs to let go of him. In tears, she turns—Ming fades, smiling.

She awakens alone, yet at peace, watching Ming's spirit depart toward reincarnation.

Director's Intention

"Veil Whispers" reimagines the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice through a Chinese mother whose son dies by suicide. Unlike Orpheus, her journey is not only a rescue but a reckoning with generational trauma—how love can turn into control, and how expectations can suffocate. She learns that desire and devotion are not enough to bring someone back. She must confront her failures as a mother, and the painful realization that her son's refusal to return is a rejection of the life she shaped for him.

This story is both personal and deeply cultural, reflecting questions urgent to East Asian families: What does it mean to forgive when harm comes from love itself? How to break the cycles of harm which repeat across generations? Veil Whispers is about love's limits and consequences, the damage we inherit and pass on, and the courage to face these truths so forgiveness—of others and ourselves—can begin.

Production Company
 Nanjing Bad Student Film, Television and Media Production Co., Ltd
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 Phone: +86 17611635160
 Contact Email: aihuidong23@gmail.com

Co-Producer
 -

Estimated Budget (USD):
 1,500,000
Financing Acquired:
 46,000 USD

Financers:
 Nanjing Bad Student Film, Television and Media Production Co.

IRIS LANHUA MA

DIRECTOR, WRITER



Iris Lanhua Ma is an award-winning writer/director with an MFA in Narrative Directing from UCLA. With a passion for pushing the boundaries of genre and exploring the fusion of diverse cultural elements, she is dedicated to making unique cinematic experiences that balance artistic vision with audience recognition. She often subverts genre conventions, using familiar frameworks to tell unexpected, emotionally grounded stories centered on underrepresented voices. Her debut feature achieved a theatrical release in China, was selected for Pingyao International Film Festival, and received a UNICEF special award and the National Project Support. Her mid-length film was an official selection at IFFR Rotterdam, winning awards in China and Japan, while her shorts have been selected at multiple Academy Award-qualifying festivals, demonstrating a consistent record of international success.

AIHUI DONG

PRODUCER



Aihui Dong is an international producer whose multicultural perspective has established him as a pioneering force in cross-cultural storytelling. His works consistently garner international recognition, with selections at Berlinale, Venice, Warsaw, and Shanghai, as well as accolades such as the NETPAC Award at Busan. Dong has a proven track record of delivering films and content that appeal to both the market and festivals. Beyond producing features with nationwide theatrical releases in China, Dong is a recognized industry leader, serving as a consultant for festivals and a juror for Webby, Shorty, and Cannes Media Awards. An expert in complex international partnerships, he produced the first-ever China-Caribbean co-production. He is now actively developing new co-productions with Saudi Arabia, Spain, and Chile.

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WORKS-IN-PROGRESS

A Girl Unknown
A Moon for Every River
Benimana
La Pyramide
Ria
The Last Days of RM
The Prodigal Son
Yesterday the Eye Didn't Sleep

A Girl Unknown

Genre: Drama, Coming-of-Age
Country: China, France
Language: Mandarin, Chinese Dialects
Status: In Post-Production



Logline

"A Girl Unknown" follows the tumultuous journey of a young Chinese girl who has three names as she navigates the complexities of her past, present, and future amidst a tapestry of three distinct family dynamics.

Synopsis

The narrative of "A Girl Unknown" details the tumultuous journey of a young Chinese girl who, by 18, has been part of three families and known by three names. She experiences abandonment, quest for love, sexual harassment, and the tragic loss of a friend, leading to a suicide attempt and a confrontation with her harasser. The story culminates with a moment of defiance and reconciliation as she faces her past and finds a new beginning.

Director's Intention

"A Girl Unknown" was inspired by the untold stories within many Chinese families, where generations of women have lived through separation, silence, and resilience. Their experiences made me reflect on how identity and belonging are shaped by loss, distance, and the longing for love. The film seeks to give form to what remains unspoken and to explore how personal and collective memories intertwine in defining who we become.

Production Company
 Pure Light Films
 Address: 41 Jin Lang Road, Building 14, Jinshan District, Shanghai, 201516, China
 Phone: +86 13817907604
 Contact Email: jzou21@gmail.com

Co-Producer
 Producer 1: Yang Wang
 Company Name: Memoria Films, China

Producer 2: Didar Domehri
 Company Name: Maneki Films, France

Producer 3: Xi Cao
 Company Name: EMEI Film Group, China

Estimated Budget (USD):
 1,800,000
Financing Acquired:
 1,400,000

Financers:
 Emei Film Group (China), Eagle Media (China), Pure Light Films (China), Memoria Films (China), ARTE France Cinéma (France), CNC Aide aux Cinémas du Monde (France), Pyramide (France), SOFICA Cofinova 21 (France) Lynn Shelton of "A certain age" grant (USA).

JING ZOU

DIRECTOR, WRITER



ZOU Jing is a Chinese writer-director and a member of the DGA. She began her career in TV documentaries and commercials before turning to narrative filmmaking. Her short Lili Alone won the Leitz Cine Discovery Prize at Cannes Critics' Week 2021 and over ten other international awards, screening at more than 80 festivals worldwide. She is now working on her debut feature A Girl Unknown, winner of the 2024 Critics' Week Next Step Prize, and aims to create films that reveal the hidden truths of modern life in China.

YANG WANG

PRODUCER



Yang is an independent producer who began her career on John Woo's "Red Cliff" (2006) and later worked on films by Tsui Hark and Leste Chen, gaining extensive experience in commercial and industrial production. Through her long-term collaboration with documentary filmmaker Wang Bing, she has established a strong reputation as a dedicated and reliable producer. Since relocating to France in 2017, she has focused on international co-productions, producing works by Zhu Shengze, Zou Jing, Zhao Hao, and Zhou Jinghao, supporting a new generation of filmmakers bridging China and the world.

DIDAR DOMEHRI

PRODUCER



Didar Domehri founded Maneki Films in 2009, and the company was the 2017 recipient of the IFIC award for young independent company of the year. She used to be head of international sales at Films Distribution/Playtime. In 2023, she founded Maneki Stories, a new company dedicated to the production of TV series. She has produced and co-produced more than 26 features, most of them selected in category A festivals and widely sold internationally. She is currently vice-president of the Unifrance college of feature film producers, member of the Union of Independent Producers bureau, and group leader for the EAVE workshop.

XI CAO

PRODUCER



Xi Cao is a producer at Emei Film Group. His credits include "A Little Wisdom" (Best Feature Documentary, Hot Docs), "Karma" (Best Actor, Pingyao International Film Festival), "7 Beats per Minute" (Official Competition, SXSW and Warsaw International Film Festival), and "You Are My Hero". He is currently producing director Zou Jing's debut feature "A Girl Unknown".

A Moon For Every River

Genre: "Shan-Shui" ("Landscape"), Family, Romance
Country: China, France
Language: Mandarin Chinese
Status: In Post-Production



Logline

A story of three women bidding farewell to one man.

Synopsis

A woman falls into grief after the passing of her father. As she gradually finds her way out of sorrow, she witnesses her mother beginning a new romance and discovers a list of wishes her father left behind before his death. Told from the perspective of "loneliness," the film spans three generations of women—elderly, middle-aged, and young—delving deeply into love, death, and the soul. It is a poetic work that offers quiet healing and reflection on life.

Director's Intention

What is it like to experience "loneliness" for the first time? I believe it mirrors the three moments of solitude one encounters throughout life:

The first is the loneliness of love — the separation and reunion between lovers. The second is the loneliness of farewell — the parting between family members or spouses through life and death. The third is the loneliness of existential loss — the ultimate solitude of one's search for meaning, a journey that only oneself can complete.

From this idea, I envisioned three women of different ages, each representing a distinct form of loneliness, to portray the stages of solitude a person experiences over a lifetime. In truth, these three women — the elderly grandmother, the middle-aged mother, and the young granddaughter — are not separate individuals, but rather reflections of the same person at different points in life.

As the third chapter of my "Shan-Shui" ("Landscape") film series, this film develops the concept of a "scroll-like montage" — a visual and auditory language in which each scroll forms a single, continuous shot — based on the explorations of the first and second chapters.

Production Company
 Hangzhou Enlightenment Culture Co., Ltd.
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 Phone: +86 186 0289 9135
 Contact Email: keisha.d@foxmail.com

Co-Producer
 Tandem Films, France

Estimated Budget (USD):
 4,700,000
Financing Acquired:
 4,000,000

Financers:
 Hangzhou Enlightenment Culture Co., Ltd. (China), Shanghai Tianyue Culture Media Co., Ltd. (China), Zhejiang Film & Television Group Co., Ltd. (China), Poly Film Investment Co., Ltd. (China), Tandem Films (France), Les Films du Losange (France).

YOU GU

DIRECTOR, WRITER



GU You (aka GU Xiaogang) lives in Hangzhou, China. His "Shan-Shui" series began with "Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains" (2019), the closing film of La Semaine de la Critique 2019 and winner of the Special Jury Prize at Tokyo FILMeX 2019. It was also named a top-ten film of the year by Cahiers du Cinéma in 2020. He recently completed the second film, "Dwelling by the West Lake" (2023), which competed in the Main Competition at the 36th Tokyo International Film Festival, where GU won the Akira Kurosawa Award. The film received three nominations at the 17th Asian Film Awards, with Jiang Qinqin winning Best Actress, and grossed 121 million RMB in China.

YIKUN YANG

WRITER



YANG Yikun graduated from the Department of Dramatic Literature at the Central Academy of Drama, earning both a bachelor's and a master's degree. Her works have been actively staged at the Beijing International Youth Theatre Festival, Shanghai International Arts Festival, Wuzhen Theatre Festival, and the Avignon Festival in France.

ZUOLONG SHAN

PRODUCER



Shan Zuolong is a film producer. Over the past decade, nearly all of his works have been selected for major international film festivals such as Cannes, Venice, and Berlin, and distributed worldwide. His credits include "Resurrection" (Special Prize, Cannes 2025 Competition), "Long Day's Journey into Night" (Un Certain Regard, Cannes 2018), "Kali Blues" (Best Emerging Director, Locarno 2015), "The Botanist" (Grand Prix, Berlinale Generation 2025), "Love Is a Gun" (Lion of the Future Best Debut, Venice 2023), and "Karst" (Best Film, Pingyao 2024). He also executive produced "The Water Murmurs," winner of the Short Film Palme d'Or at Cannes 2022.

KEXIN DU

PRODUCER



Du Kexin, film producer, known for works such as "Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains" (2019) and "Dwelling by the West Lake" (2023).

Benimana

Genre: Drama
Country: Rwanda, Gabon, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Norway
Language: Kinyarwanda
Status: In Post-Production



Logline

Veneranda, a survivor of the Tutsi genocide working for reconciliation, must face her old demons when her daughter unexpectedly gets pregnant.

Synopsis

Rwanda 2012. The country is emerging from an era of silence after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsis by extremist Hutus. Traditional courts are being set up around the country with the aim of bringing justice and reconciliation.

Veneranda, a survivor, is convinced of the need for these trials. Despite the pressure, she organizes group discussions between victims and perpetrators' families. Therapy for some, an act of betrayal for others, these testimonial sessions revive and reveal the traumas that each of them tries to overcome in their own way. The wounds of Veneranda's past are exposed when she learns the truth.

Director's Intention

"Benimana" explores the silent legacy of Rwanda's 1994 genocide — how its invisible wounds still shape our capacity to forgive, to rebuild, and to love. Through four women — Veneranda, Tina, Victoire, and Madeleine — the film captures the resilience of a country seeking peace within itself. My intention was never to portray victims, but women reclaiming their own narratives, healing through memory rather than silence.

The film has been fully shot in Rwanda and is currently in advanced post-production, with fine-cut editing in progress. Presenting it at the Red Sea Souk is a key step toward completing sound and color work, and finding partners to help bring this universal story of reconciliation and survival to the world. Benimana is a mirror held up to the strength and humanity of my people — and, beyond that, to all who have lived through loss.

Production Company
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 benimanafilmpoint@gmail.com

Co-Delegate Producer
 OGWELI PRODUCTION
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 Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
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 Samanthabiffot@gmail.com

Co-Producer
 Les films du bilboquet, France
 Duo Films, Norway
 Princesse M Productions, Gabon

Estimated Budget (USD):
 920,371
Financing Acquired:
 655,042

Financers:
 Jeune Création Francophone (+ Bonus DEENTAL) (France); OIF – Fonds de développement (OIF – Development Fund) (Francophonie); OIF – Aide à la production (+ Bonus ACP) (OIF – Production Aid + ACP Bonus) (Francophonie); TUI Care Foundation – Co-Production Award (Germany); Rwanda Film Fund (+ Bonus ACP) (Rwanda); Hubert Bals Fund – Script Development (Netherlands); Visions Sud Est (Switzerland); Canal+ Afrique (France); Institut Gabonais de l'Image (Gabonese Image Institute) (Gabon); TV5 Monde (France); Sørfond (Norway).

MARIE-CLÉMENTINE DUSABEJAMBO

DIRECTOR, WRITER



Born in Rwanda, Marie-Clémentine Dusabejambo is a self-taught filmmaker. In 2010, she directed her first short film, "Lyiza," which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2011 and won a Tanit de Bronze at the JCC 2012. These short films ("Lyiza" – 2011, "Une Place Pour Moi" – 2016, and "Icyasha" – 2018) have been screened at numerous festivals and won multiple awards, including the Tanit de Bronze JCC 2012 / JCC 2016, the Prix Cinit at the 2012 Milan Film Festival, the Ousmane Sembene Award, the Signs Award, and the Golden Dhow at the 2016 Zanzibar International Film Festival (ZIFF), the Thomas Sankara Award and the Prix de la Chance FESPACO 2017, and the Eferé Ozako Award AMAA 2017. "Benimana" is her first feature-length fiction film project.

SAMANTHA BIFFOT

PRODUCER



Samantha Biffot launched Ogweli Production in 2022 in Ivory Coast with her first project, "Benimana" by Marie Clémentine Dusabejambo. Before creating this company, she had already created two other production companies that are still in operation: Princesse M Productions in Gabon in 2010, which mainly produced documentaries, and On est ensemble Productions in Ivory Coast in 2017, which specialized in television formats (series for Canal+, TV5, and television programs). She participated in the EAVE Producer's Network program, Ouaga Film Lab, and La Fabrique des Cinémas du Monde with the project "Benimana."

La Pyramide

Genre: Supernatural, Fantasy, Horror, Thriller
Country: Nigeria, Brazil, UK, US, Senegal
Language: English, French, Portuguese
Status: In Post-Production



Logline

Souls across three continents must confront the darkness that guards the light they seek.

Synopsis

In a Memphis blues club, Man and Mena's encounter shatters reality, launching a supernatural odyssey across three continents where cultures collide with mystical forces.

The narrative weaves three interconnected stories. A São Paulo executive, haunted by visions, abandons her corporate life after encountering the mysterious Friend. Returning to hometown, Salvador, she confronts her mother's ghost as the orixás blur into one terrifying, beautiful truth and ancient memories awaken within her.

In post-Katrina New Orleans, Man builds a life with Mena, a Marabout fleeing Senegal's oppressive government. When the malevolent Keeper threatens them, Mena must navigate reality's fractures alongside Mardi Gras Indians to save Man from consuming darkness.

Meanwhile, in riot-torn Dakar, lab worker Savior remains mysteriously untouched by chaos. Seeing universes in particles and destiny in his wife's eyes, he receives whispers from a Good Jinn about sacred baobab trees and a transformative calling.

"La Pyramide" pulses like jazz improvisation, fusing Memphis blues, Brazilian Candomblé rhythms, New Orleans brass, and Senegalese drums into an unstoppable crescendo. Four strangers discover they're vessels of something primordial—a quest where light demands passage through darkness, and pyramids are constructed not from stone but from souls reaching toward the infinite.

Director's Intention

La Pyramide is inspired by my feature film, MAMI WATA - which took seven years of my life to make. It builds upon the foundations laid - a new vision of dark bodies on screen. A perspective of us by us that we rarely see, if ever depicted in African cinema or by any cinema. The goal here is to create a new way of seeing, and being.

I feel that we are all looking for something - even those of us "who do not believe". I think there is a seeking we inadvertently become a part of, for as long as we walk this Earth. For me, my walk is cinema - and as I walk, I will discover more and present my discoveries on screen. In La Pyramide - I will present what I have found, and I will celebrate what I have seen - a new way. It's a celebration!

Production Company
 Abbas Nokhasteh and Andrés Borda González
 Borda González
 Barco Openvizor
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 317 367 5814
 Contact Email: abbas@openvizor.
 com / andriosha@gmail.com

Co-Producer
 Oge Obasi
 Fiery Film, Nigeria

Estimated Budget (USD):
 3,000,000
Financing Acquired:
 1,350,000

Financers:
 Colombia, Brazil, US

C.J. 'FIERY' OBASI

DIRECTOR, WRITER



C.J. 'Fiery' Obasi was born and raised in South-Eastern Nigerian town, Owerri where he developed a knack for drawing comics of his favorite books and films. His films "Ojuju" (2014) and "O-Town" (2015) screened at many festivals, including Gothenburg and Fantasia to international acclaim. His short film, "Hello, Rain" (2018) premiered at Oberhausen and over 40 festivals, winning Jury Prize at Fantasia, and BFI Short Film Award nomination. "Juju Stories" (2021), anthology film directed by the Surreal16 Collective (C.J. Obasi, Abba T. Makama, Michael Omonua) won Boccacino D'oro Award for Best Film at Locarno. His latest feature "Mami Wata" (2023), premiered at Sundance Film Festival 2023, where it won a Special Jury Award for Cinematography. "Mami Wata" was selected as Nigeria's official entry for the 2024 Academy Awards and nominated for Best International Film at the 2024 Independent Spirit Awards, as well as Outstanding International Motion Picture in the 2024 NAACP Image Awards.

ABBAS NOKHASTEHE

PRODUCER



Abbas Nokhasteh is a creative producer, nurturing long-term relationships with international filmmakers and exploring subjects on the periphery. He is founder/ director of arts organization Openvizor based in London, UK. Abbas has produced award winning documentary and fiction features and shorts, that have premiered at Sundance, Rotterdam IFFR, Locarno, Cannes Director's Fortnight and Cannes Semaine de la Critique, including Alejandro Jodorowsky's latest film Endless Poetry, Chuck Norris vs. Communism and Ballad of Exiles.

ANDRÉS BORDA GONZÁLEZ

PRODUCER



Andrés Borda González is a screenwriter and producer from Colombia, with ample experience both in the commercial world of television and the independent film community. He is the showrunner of Netflix's series "My encounter with Evil" (2022). He has written and directed episodes of series such as "El man es Germán" (one of Latin America's most popular comedy TV shows). He has developed TV series for production companies such as Miracol, Dynamo, Vice Studios, amongst others.

Ria

Genre: Drama, Punk
Country: Philippines, Norway, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Japan
Language: Tagalog
Status: In Post-Production



Logline

With a demolition threat by an unscrupulous developer, the young folk-punk Ria joins her foster mom and their punk gang to defend their home, the sole surviving building standing in the ruins of their neighborhood.

Synopsis

Ria, a 25-year-old punk woman, lives in Tarima, a commune led by OLGA, a 52-year-old punk matriarch. Their home sits in the middle of Sitio Rosario, an urban neighborhood left desolate after mass evictions and demolitions. With growing pressure from the Galastor Corporation, the punks' days in the house are numbered. Vachel's Cave is set for demolition in five days.

To help sustain the commune and cover Olga's medical expenses, Ria works as a hotel housekeeper. Despite the community's efforts to organize food drives and outreach for the youth, Galastor's harassment escalates. Utilities are cut, and the threat of eviction looms larger.

As Ria takes on grueling work to keep them afloat, she joins other punk collectives in a protest against Galastor. The demonstration turns violent, leaving Olga severely injured. Refusing medical care, Olga chooses to return to Tarima, the home she built and where her lover rests.

When bulldozers arrive, Ria, now radicalized by grief and fury, leads the punks and their allies in a final stand against the system that seeks to erase them.

Director's Intention

Filipino punk culture shaped my values and beliefs. It taught me to question authority, resist injustice, and find freedom through art. Through this community, I met Pong Spotanyo, a graffiti artist and fellow punk who shared my dream of making a film about the Philippine punk subculture. Together, we created Ria, a woman who embodies defiance, survival, and the struggle to exist in a system built to erase her.

When Pong passed away during the pandemic, a victim of our country's broken medical system, I vowed to continue what we started. His spirit of resistance lives on in this film.

Through Ria, I explore punk not just as rebellion, but as collective strength. Ria's journey mirrors the awakening of a leader who learns that true resistance is found in courage, solidarity, and empathy. Punk, after all, is for everyone. Anyone can resist. Anyone can be a punk.

Production Company

WAF Studios Inc.
 Address: Unit 203, 2nd Floor, Casa Martha, Scout Rallos Extension, Quezon City, NCR, 1103, Philippines
 Phone: 09178961042
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Co-Producer

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 Email: alem@daluyong.ph
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 Address: 72 D. Bonifacio Street, ITC Compound, East Canumay, Valenzuela City, Philippines

Nathan Studios (Philippines)
 Email: nathanstudiosinc001@gmail.com

Momo Film Co (Singapore)
 Email: hello@momofilm.co
 Website: https://momofilm.co

Co-Producer

Fidalgo Films / AS Fidalgo (Norway)
 Email: fernanda@fidalgo.no

Phone: +47 38 02 40 04
 Address: Dronningensgate 30, 4666 Kristiansand, Norway
 Alternate: Gyldenløves gate 75, Kristiansand (as listed in some registries)
 Website: https://fidalgo.no

Yaman Films Co., Ltd (Japan)
 Location: Okinawa, Japan
 Email: dragon2arm@gmail.com
 Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/yaman_films_jp

Estimated Budget (USD): 830,500
Financing Acquired: 652,444.33

Financers: Film Development Council of The Philippines, Purin Pictures, Nathan Studios, Momo Films Co., Yaman Films, Sorfond, Red Sea Production Fund, Talents Tokyo Next Step, NCCA.

ARVIN BELARMINO

DIRECTOR



Arvin Belarmino is a Filipino filmmaker and alumnus of Talents Tokyo, Locarno Filmmakers Academy, Prodiure Au Sud (Nantes), La Fabrique Cinema, Next Step Program by La Semaine de la Critique, and the Cinéfondation Residency at Festival de Cannes. At the 2024 Cannes Film Festival, he presented two short films — "Radikals" (Critics' Week Competition) and "Slig" (Directors' Fortnight, Directors' Factory Philippines). In 2025, his short film "Agapito" was an Official Selection at the 78th Festival de Cannes and at the 50th Toronto International Film Festival, winning Honourable Mention.

KYLA DANELLE ROMERO

WRITER



Kyla Danelle Romero is a Filipina filmmaker whose works explore warmth, identity, and memory. Her debut short film, "Dosena," won 3rd Place at the 34th Gawad Alaternibo and earned a Best Short Film nomination at the FAMAS Awards. She co-wrote "Hinakdal," which won the Audience Choice, NETPAC, and Best Screenplay awards at the 2023 Cinemalaya Film Festival. Since 2021, she has co-written "Ria" with director Arvin Belarmino—a feature project that received a Special Mention at Talents Tokyo and the CNC Pitch Award at the Festival de Cannes Residency. In 2024, she co-wrote "Radikals," which premiered at the 63rd Semaine de la Critique in Cannes. In 2025, her short "Agapito" competed in the 78th Cannes Film Festival Short Film Main Competition, making her the first Filipina director in that section. She was also selected for the Women Writing Lab of HFF Munich to develop her debut feature, "Giliw (Beloved)."

KRISTINE DE LEON

PRODUCER



Kristine De Leon is a Filipino producer whose films include "All" by Adnan Al Rajsev and "Agapito" by Arvin Belarmino and Kyla Romero, both selected for the Official Competition at the 2025 Festival de Cannes, with "All" receiving a Special Mention. Both films also screened at the Toronto International Film Festival. She produced "Radikals" (2024), which competed at Cannes' 63rd Semaine de la Critique. An alumna of the Busan Asian Film School, Kristine has participated in Prodiure au Sud, La Fabrique Cinema, the SGIFF Asian Producers Network, the Zurich Film Festival Academy, and APOST Lab.

The Last Days of R.M

Genre: Psychological Thriller
Country: France, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Qatar
Language: French, Arabic
Status: In Post-Production



Logline

Exiled from Algeria after death threats, a haunted writer battles guilt and loneliness in a bleak French suburb, where reality and fiction collide as he confronts his inner demons and searches for redemption through the only weapon he has left — words.

Synopsis

In 1990s Algeria, writer R.M. faces death threats amid a wave of terrorist violence targeting intellectuals. Forced into exile while his friends are murdered, he settles alone in a bleak French suburb, tormented by guilt for abandoning his wife and young son. Haunted by memories of fear and loss, R.M. struggles to rebuild his life — seeking refugee status, writing a novel, and reconciling with his estranged family — but each attempt deepens his despair.

An old friend, F-Z, tries to reconnect him with other exiled Algerian intellectuals, yet R.M. feels only shame and futility. When confronted by his injured poet friend Samir S., tensions rise over moral responsibility and political betrayal.

Soon, a mysterious figure, the Man from Services, and his elusive companion Nedjma begin to stalk him. Pursued by these shadows and as strange symptoms ravage his body and mind, R.M.'s reality dissolves into visions of characters from his novels and fragments of his homeland. Trapped between the real and the imagined, R.M. descends into a feverish inner journey where exile, memory, and creation merge.

Director's Intention

"The Last Days of R.M." reflects on the solitude and moral anguish of a writer confronting both illness and the collapse of his ideals. Through R.M.'s delirium and imagination, reality and dream merge, revealing a man haunted by guilt, by his characters, and by the violence that ravaged Algeria's intellectual world. His illness becomes a metaphor for a deeper collective wound — the failure of thought before barbarism. Echoing *About Leila*, this second film explores the same darkness through a new lens. Ultimately, the film is a tribute to a lost generation of writers, and to the enduring, redemptive power of poetry and imagination.

Production Company
 In Vivo Films
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 Contact Email: louise@invivofilms.
 com

Co-Producer
 KJ Films, Algeria
 Dharamsala, France

Estimated Budget (USD):
 1,840,000
0 Financing Acquired:
 1,614,000

Financers:
 Red Sea Fund (Saudi Arabia), Doha Film Institute (Qatar), Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (Libanon), Algerian National Fund (Algeria), Algiers French Institute (Algeria), Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine (France), Charente-Maritime Department (France), Gironde Department (France), Bordeaux Metropole (France), CNC (France), Europe Creative MEDIA, Cofinova (France), Cine+ TV (France), Films Boutique (France).

AMIN SIDI-BOUMEDIENE

DIRECTOR, WRITER



Amin Sidi-Boumediene is an Algerian filmmaker born in 1982 in Algiers. A graduate of the CLCF film school in Paris, he directed several acclaimed short films, including *Demain, Alger?* (2011) and *The Island* (2012). His first feature film, *About Leila* (2019), premiered at Cannes Critics' Week and was widely praised for its bold visual style and psychological depth, marking him as one of Algeria's most distinctive cinematic voices. His work blends realism and symbolism, exploring memory, violence, and the wounds of Algerian history. With *The Last Days of R.M.*, he continues his exploration of trauma and the artist's role in society, using poetry and imagination as tools to confront darkness.

LOUISE BELICAUD AND CLAIRE CHARLES-GERVAIS

PRODUCERS



Founded in 2015 by Louise Belicaud and Claire Charles-Gervais, In Vivo Films is a Bordeaux-based arthouse production company committed to championing daring international filmmakers. Its acclaimed slate includes *"Thirst Street"* (Nathan Silver, Tribeca & Venice Days 2017), *"About Leila"* (Amin Sidi-Boumediene, Cannes Critics' Week 2019), *"La Fortaleza"* (Jorge Thielen-Armand, Rotterdam 2020), *"Dos Estaciones"* (Juan Pablo González, Sundance 2022), *"Un Varón"* (Fabián Hernández, Directors' Fortnight 2022), and *"Autobiography"* (Makbul Mubarak, Venice Orizzonti 2022, Fipresci Prize). *"Levante"* (Lillah Halla, Cannes Critics' Week 2023) also earned the Fipresci Prize for parallel selections. Recent works include *"Horizonte"* (César Augusto Acevedo, TIFF Discovery 2024) and *"Hijo Mayor"* (Cecilia Kang, Locarno 2024). *"The Last Days of R.M."* by Amin Sidi-Boumediene is currently in post-production.

The Prodigal Son

Genre: Drama
Country: Tunisia, France, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Belgium, Qatar
Language: Arabic
Status: In Post-Production



Logline

Salem, 25, is a pig farmer in Cairo. Swine flu virus appears abroad, psychosis takes hold of Cairo and puts Salem and his community to the test.

Synopsis

Back from the army, Salem, 25, joins his family in Cairo's rag-picking district, home to the majority of Copts and more than 300,000 pigs. There he finds his father Youssef, a silent former swineherd who regrets village life, 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. The rag pickers are stigmatized 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 pressure increases around the Community. The Mubarak government eventually passes a law to slaughter all the pigs. It is a shock for Salem who finds himself torn between the decision of his family to endorse the government's decision and the actions of resistance organized by a swineherd syndicate.

Director's Intention

The succession of events against which Salem struggles to keep his livestock alive creates a climate of very strong tension. The increasingly suffocating atmosphere grips my protagonist as the "pig crisis" progresses, until his final escape- as the ultimate rampart to save his herd. I like the idea of having a suspended ending where the future remains uncertain. Salem will absorb all along the social violence imposed upon him while witnessing his helpless community solely aiming at forgetting its scars. During the film, the camera will closely follow Salem, according to his need to make his own choices. The image of the film will be cold and stylized. Camera movements will be hand held and smooth, never shaky. I really want to create an intimacy among the characters and I intend to use tight framing.

Production Company
 Cinetelefilms
 Address: 23, Rue Andalousie, Borj Baccouche, Ariana, 2080, Tunisia
 Phone: +216 23 449 001
 Contact Email: mh.attia@cinetele-films.net

Les Films du Tambour
 Address: 102, Quai Louis Blériot, 75016 Paris, France
 Phone: +33 6 14 55 14 05
 Contact Email: rani@filmstambour.com

Co-Producer
 26one1, Egypt
 Need Productions, Belgium

Estimated Budget (USD):
 1,514,150
0 Financing Acquired:
 1,063,250

Financers:
 Les films du Tambour (France), CINETELEFILMS (Tunisia), 26one1 (Egypt), CNC (France), Red Sea Fund and Souk (Saudi Arabia), Doha Film Institute (Qatar), ART Sunnyland (Egypt).

RANI MASSALHA

DIRECTOR, WRITER



In 2011, Rani Massalha directed the short film "Elvis of Nazareth," which won the Unifrance Jury Prize at the 2012 Cannes Film Festival. The film was later acquired by Canal+ and BBC Arabic. In 2013, he directed and co-produced his debut feature film "Giraffada," starring Saleh Bakri, Laure de Clermont, and Roschdy Zem. The film premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival, toured internationally, and had an official screening at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. In 2014, Rani Massalha founded Les Films du Tambour with Marie Legrand. The company produces films by international auteurs that regularly screen at A-category festivals and are distributed in France and worldwide.

HABIB ATTIA

PRODUCER



Tunis-born film and television producer Habib Attia focuses on fiction and documentary projects that explore contemporary sociocultural issues. His productions have been distributed worldwide, acclaimed, and awarded at major festivals including Cannes (2023, 2022, 2017, 2014, 2011), Venice (2024, 2020, 2019, 2012), San Sebastián, and Toronto. He was nominated three times for the Oscars with "Four Daughters" (2024), "The Man Who Sold His Skin" (2021), and "Brotherhood" (2020). In 2021, he was honored as Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters of the French Republic, and in 2025, he became a member of the Oscars Academy.

Yesterday the Eye Didn't Sleep

Genre: Poetic Drama
Country: Belgium, Palestine, Lebanon
Language: Arabic
Status: In Post-Production



Logline

In a Bedouin village in the Bekaa Valley, everyone is looking for Gamra. She is accused of burning the vehicle of the man she loved when he married someone else. Will this burning flame spread out to the entire village?

Synopsis

In the quiet fog of the Bekaa Valley, someone sets fire to a truck, and with it, a spark of trouble spreads through a tightly woven community. Gamra is gone—maybe hiding, maybe running—and her cousins Yasser, Jawaher, and Rim take to the roads to find her. The deeper they look, the more they run into ghosts, old grudges, and the slow, burning logic of revenge. Back home, the sisters are chosen to make things right. They're not asked—they're offered. One is calm, the other resisting, but both know how quickly girls can be traded for peace. The days pass. Wool is cut. Wool is washed. Eyes are cast downward. And yet, everything shifts beneath the surface: a secret song, a nervous goodbye, a lipstick smudge in the dark. This is a story about what happens in the quiet—between fields, behind curtains, inside vans. It's about women who carry too much, men who speak in codes, and a land that holds its breath, waiting for something to end... or begin.

Director's Intention

My grandmother was forcibly married at 14—a story that haunted me since childhood. In my short film *Trumpets in the Sky*, I paid tribute to her story, filming in the Bekaa Valley, where I witnessed firsthand the tribal codes that still govern. This feature continues that exploration. The experience was to live within the Bedouin community, build trust, and cast non-actors—people living their truth, open to the unknown. Their energy brings authenticity that's essential. In tribal revenge, women are often reduced to objects to "cool blood." I want to ask: can a woman claim her fate in such a world? My cinematic language blends neo-realism and poetry, where plot slowly dissolves into emotion and space. The story becomes secondary to presence. Through long workshops, co-writing, and immersion, we aimed to create a visceral film rooted in lived experience. With minimal crew and resources, we embraced simplicity— not as a constraint, but as the only way to keep emotion intact.

Production Company
 Atata
 Address: Rue Paul Janson 81,
 4020 Liège, Belgium
 Phone: +32 474 25 75 37
 Contact Email: jennifer@atata.be

Rakan Mayasi
 Address: Rue Vandenbranden 38,
 1000 Brussels, Belgium
 Phone: +32 496 66 11 17
 Contact Email: rakan.mayasi@gmail.com

Co-Producer
 -

Estimated Budget (USD):
 383,000
0 Financing Acquired:
 260,000

Financers:
 Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles (Belgium), Tax Shelter (Belgium), Final Cut in Venice – Music Award (Greece), Cinelink Sarajevo Wip / Turkish National Radio Television Award (Turkey), BeTV (Belgium).

RAKAN MAYASI

DIRECTOR, WRITER



Rakan Mayasi is an independent Palestinian filmmaker, born in Germany and based in Brussels. He studied cinema and psychology in Lebanon and trained under Abbas Kiarostami at the Asian Film Academy in South Korea. He holds an MA in Filmmaking from LUCA School of Arts in Belgium and recently trained with Béla Tarr in Budapest. His films have premiered at major international festivals and received numerous awards. "Roubama" competed at Locarno in 2012, while "Bonboné" (TIFF 2017) — about Palestinian sperm smuggling from Israeli prisons — won 35 awards. "Trumpets in the Sky" (TIFF 2021) explores visual poetry and mythology, earning an honorable mention. His latest film, "The Key," a political fantasy-thriller centered on the Palestinian right of return, premiered at SXSW. "Yesterday the Eye Didn't Sleep" marks his debut feature.

JENNIFER RITTER

PRODUCER



Born in Germany and raised in Belgium in a multilingual environment, Jennifer Ritter has always been passionate about exploring different cultures and countries. After a school exchange year in Argentina, she studied German and Arabic literature in Brussels, which later led her to Syria, where she worked in the tourism industry. While completing her master's degree in Brussels, she began her career in the cinema industry with the Euromed Audiovisual Programme of the European Commission in 2012. Two years later, she joined a Belgian production company, where she worked for over nine years. In 2023, driven by a desire for creative freedom and new challenges, she founded her own production company, Atata, where she develops various projects. "Yesterday the Eye Didn't Sleep" will be the first feature produced by her company.



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THE SERIESLAB PROGRAM

■ The Red Sea Labs presents the 3rd edition of the SeriesLab program, held in partnership with Film Independent. Now in its third year, the program continues to champion exceptional episodic storytelling from the Arab world, Africa, and Asia, supporting writers and creators in developing compelling, original series for global audiences.

This year, 8 selected projects take part in a three-part, hybrid virtual and in-person residency designed to provide participants with the essential skills, industry knowledge, and mentorship needed to shape and pitch their television pilots.

Working in pairs, participants engage in workshops, masterclasses, and one-on-one mentorship with acclaimed U.S. industry experts and episodic creators, refining their concepts in a collaborative and inspiring environment. A highlight of the program includes an exclusive residency in Los Angeles, where participants attend an advanced workshop and the Film Independent Forum — a premier event that connects global storytellers with industry leaders and opportunities.

Culminating at the Red Sea Souk, the SeriesLab will showcase its selected projects to an audience of international buyers, studios, networks, and producers, further strengthening cross-border collaboration and amplifying new creative voices in television storytelling.

■ About Film Independent

For 40 years, Film Independent has helped filmmakers get their projects made and seen. The nonprofit organization's core mission is to champion creative independence in visual storytelling in all its forms, and to foster a culture of inclusion, supporting a global community of artists and audiences who embody diversity, innovation, curiosity and uniqueness of vision. In addition to producing the Film Independent Spirit Awards, the organization supports creative professionals with artist development programs, grants and labs. Their signature mentorship program "Project Involve" fosters the careers of talented filmmakers from underrepresented communities. Education events and workshops equip filmmakers of all ages and experience levels with tools and resources. "Global Media Makers" is a cultural exchange program produced in partnership with the U.S. Department of State, providing career-building opportunities for international film professionals, and year-round screening series. "Film Independent Presents" offers a robust program of unique cinematic experiences, including screenings, conversations, as well as the "Live Reads" and "Bring the Noise" musical events.

SERIESLAB PROJECTS

Dérift
Flash
Flyweights
Mad Bounty and The Midnight Gun
Money Town
Side Effects
Society
Till Death Do Us Part

Dérift

Genre:
Country:
Language:
Status:

Thriller, Crime
Saudi Arabia
Arabic
In Development

Logline

When Lujain, a Saudi cyber forensic detective, takes on a high stakes cyberattack case, she confronts a moral dilemma after discovering the attackers are themselves victims of injustice.

Synopsis

When cyber forensic analyst Lujain returns to Jeddah, she's pulled into family secrets, corporate corruption, and a digital mystery. Her cousin Lama disappears after following a cryptic prompt from Dérift, an app meant to break routines. Lujain's investigation points toward her powerful uncle Abdullatif and his hidden ties to IB-Tech and the university, even as she's assigned to probe a university data breach. Khalid and Majed's vendetta against Abdullatif collides with Lujain's case after Khalid is scapegoated and expelled. Dérift, built by Majed with Rajneesh, becomes both tool and weapon, its anti-tracking features exploited to hide Lama and stage a cyberattack on IB-Tech. Alliances shift: Lujain and Khalid form an uneasy partnership; Suzan's broadcasts sway public opinion; Majed's ruthlessness clashes with Khalid's conscience. Threats and scandals escalate. Lama is traced to a remote cabin tied to Khalid's family; Sami is trapped in a fortified server room. After a targeted attack sidelines Lujain, she refuses to quit, using Dérift to follow the digital trail. Ibrahim takes the fall for IB-Tech, while Lujain must choose between strict justice and personal honor as the truth surfaces: Lama left to escape her father's control. The case closes, corruption is exposed, Dérift launches nationwide, and unresolved truths leave moral questions lingering.

ZAHRA ZUHAIR

WRITER



Zahra Zuhair is a Saudi-American screenwriter and novelist whose storytelling lives in the in-between, where identity, emotion, and the messiness of being human collide. With roots in two cultures and a path that bridges science and art, she writes with empathy and curiosity. She's interned as a writer with Good Chaos and GotU Agency, completed the ESRA Cote d'Azur International Filmmaking program and an NFTS Filmmaking certificate, and is currently attached to Box7 Film Production as a writer. Zahra wrote and produced Audio On (premiered at the Saudi Film Festival). A former dentist, her years in healthcare taught her to truly listen, to notice what's unspoken, and that instinct continues to shape her voice on the page, adding philosophical depth and emotional resonance.

MAWADDA SALLAM

PRODUCER



Mawadda Sallam is a Saudi freelance producer. She pursued filmmaking despite societal norms and the absence of a local film industry at the time. Inspired by her childhood passion for visual storytelling, Mawadda has become an active figure in Saudi Arabia's growing cinema scene. Her notable credits include "Quareer", "Becoming", and Ahlam "Alasr", which premiered at the 2023 Red Sea International Film Festival. She also completed a scholarship program at ESRA Group in Cannes, supported by MBC Academy. In addition to her work in feature projects, Mawadda has produced several short films, most recently "Daughter of the Distant Heart", which was screened at the 2025 Saudi Film Festival.

Writer's Statement

I've always been passionate about writing stories that empower women and challenge societal norms, especially those exploring the struggles and triumphs of women in male-dominated spaces. My series Dérift centers on Lujain, a young female cyber forensic detective in Saudi, who confronts professional challenges in her field while navigating family expectations.

A key element is the interplay of control and chaos of the unknown: Lujain grapples with the rigid control of societal norms and family pressures, only to embrace the chaos of personal growth and moral awakening, symbolizing the unpredictable path to empowerment.

Drawing from my experiences living in the UAE and Saudi, I've witnessed the cultural tensions women face pursuing careers in male-dominated fields. This fuels my story of hope and resilience, where Lujain discovers her moral compass, balancing societal duties with personal desires amid injustice.

Dérift also captures the region's cultural shifts, the tension between traditional values and modern ambitions, addressing gender inequality, family loyalty, class division, and women's evolving workforce roles. This narrative is one I'm deeply passionate about, and it feels more relevant than ever.

Flash

Genre:
Country:
Language:
Status:

Mystery, Occult, Crime, Thriller
South Korea
Korean
In Development

Logline

A forensic-fueled homicide detective joins forces with a partner with shamanic heritage to investigate a series of school "suicides" — where proof isn't enough, and the supernatural might hold the clues.

Synopsis

Detective Ji-in (33), a homicide detective who trusts only science and logic, is assigned to a wave of teenage suicides at her former high school. Her new partner is Young-suk (29), a rookie investigator from a shamanic family who carries a talisman keychain — something she distrusts. But the urgency of the case forces them to cooperate, and gradually, her idealistic approach to investigation begins to merge with his odd but instinctive intuition.

The investigation begins when top student Chae-ra (17) goes missing. Ji-in tracks her last contact — Ye-na (17) — and learns Ye-na is missing too. Days later, Ye-na returns and leads them to an abandoned warehouse where Chae-ra's body is found with fatal head trauma. Although Ye-na is suspected, a video shows Chae-ra struck her own head fatally — ruled suicide.

More students then attempt self-harm or suicide. Ye-na is rescued from one attempt and whispers in terror: "It's the light." She claims an unseen force grants people their deepest desires — but ultimately consumes them.

Ji-in uncovers a cursed relic called the "Stone of Light" and Ye-na's emerging psychic power. To stop the force, Ji-in must face what science alone cannot explain — and uncover a hidden truth from her past.

SOOYOUNG KIM

WRITER



A former cinephile turned writer-director, she studied art in college and focuses on genre storytelling—horror, thriller, sci-fi, and dark comedy. Her short film "Superpower Girl" (2017) was invited to over 15 international festivals and surpassed 4.4 million views on YouTube. The project was later developed into a feature project and showcased at Cannes Market's Fantastic 7 in 2019. Her next project, "The Nurse," was selected for the 2020 Hong Kong–Asia Film Financing Forum. That same year, she directed the official trailer for the Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival. Her sci-fi project "Reboot" was pitched at Sitges FanPitch in 2022, later developed into a novel and published in 2024. Her latest work, the occult crime thriller series "Flash," was selected for the 2025 Red Sea SeriesLab.

DONGHWAN KIM

PRODUCER



Majored in film directing in the U.S., he began his producing career as the production manager for the Korea–Japan co-production "KT," and served as Korean line producer for Claire Denis's "The Intruder." He later produced the Korean feature "The Beastie Boys." He gained international recognition with "Superpower Girl" (2017), a short invited to over 15 international festivals and viewed over 4.4 million times on ALTER's YouTube channel. His feature projects—including "Superpower Girl," "The Nurse," and "Reboot"—were selected for Cannes Fantastic 7 (2019), HAF (2020), NAFF (2022), and Sitges FanPitch (2022). In 2023, he represented Korea at the Rotterdam Lab. In 2025, his latest series "Flash" was selected for the Red Sea SeriesLab. Alongside producing, he teaches screenwriting at Chung-Ang University in Korea.

Writer's Statement

"Flash" is a Korean mystery-occult crime thriller that fuses police investigation, supernatural horror, and the emotional turbulence of teenage life. Set in a girls' high school, Season 1 explores how, in today's hyper-competitive world, visibility means survival. I wanted to show how invisible girls are driven to extremes just to be seen—and how, once they gain that power, it turns them into monsters.

Every society breeds monsters from what it fears, desires, or denies. In "Flash", that monster is a cursed light: beautiful, seductive, and deadly. Rooted in Korean shamanism rather than Western demonology, the story draws on 15th-century meteor records and the legend of the shaman Dolbi to imagine a long-sealed relic unleashed by human longing.

Blending rhetorical suspense with Korea's spiritual darkness, "Flash" becomes an exploration of desire, trauma, and the collapse of reason.

Flyweights

Genre: Drama, Comedy
Country: Kazakhstan
Language: Kazakh
Status: In Development

Logline

Raised by a paralyzed ex-gangster, a 19-year-old pole-dancing street fighter trades drugs for boxing — punching her way toward Olympic gold and the mother who left her.

Synopsis

At nineteen, Nargiz has already lived a lifetime. Raised by her wheelchair-bound father — a once-feared gangster turned broken poet — she survives the streets of Almaty through pole dancing, street fights, and small-time hustles.

One night, when a drunk man harasses a girl in a bar, Nargiz steps in — and with a single punch knocks him out cold. The act, both reckless and righteous, draws the attention of Zhan, a washed-up coach of Kazakhstan's national women's boxing team, who sees in her raw instinct something worth shaping.

Thrown into the harsh, male-dominated world of Olympic boxing, Nargiz must fight not only her rivals but also her own anger, addiction, and buried shame. The gym becomes a battlefield of pride and pain, where loyalty and jealousy collide, and every bruise brings her closer to facing the mother who abandoned her.

As Nargiz punches her way through fear and doubt, chasing both redemption and gold, “Flyweights” unfolds as a visceral, intimate story of a girl who turns survival into strength — and violence into grace.



ELDAR SHIBANOV

WRITER, DIRECTOR



Eldar Shibonov is a director and screenwriter from Kazakhstan. His short film “Sex, Fear, and Hamburgers” was selected for competition at the Venice Film Festival. His debut feature project “Mountain Onion” won a €150,000 grant from Biennale College Cinema during development and premiered at the 79th Venice International Film Festival. Eldar is an alumnus of Berlinale Talents and the Asian Film Academy. His works explore the collision between tenderness and brutality, often blending realism with elements of absurdity and humor. He splits his time between London and Almaty, runs in the mornings for meditation, and loves cooking for family and friends.

YULIYA LEVITSKAYA

PRODUCER, CO-WRITER



Yuliya Levitskaya is a screenwriter, producer, and production designer from Kazakhstan, born on Sakhalin Island. Over twenty years in cinema, she has worked across animation, special effects, screenwriting, and producing. She founded the production studio ARTDEPARTMENT.KZ, collaborating with Eldar and Dias Shibonov—two of their films were presented at the Venice Film Festival—and created Central Asia's first SFX & Makeup Studio. Her other work includes animatronic set design for theater and production design for films. Passionate about independent film projects, Yuliya fosters a creative environment and organizes workshops for filmmakers.

Writer's Statement

Almost ten years ago, I filmed a documentary about the women's national boxing team of Kazakhstan. I was struck by their strength, discipline, and beauty — by how fiercely they trained, how much they carried, and how little the world saw of their inner lives. These were young women fighting not only in the ring but within themselves — balancing their masculine and feminine sides, trying to find who they were in a system that often decided for them.

When my daughter was born, I started thinking differently about what it means to raise a strong girl — someone who can protect herself, but who doesn't lose her uniqueness in the process. That thought brought me back to those boxers — to their fire, contradictions, and courage.

This series grew from that feeling. It's about girls from Central Asia fighting for Olympic gold, but also fighting to define themselves. For me, it's a story of strength without losing humanity, of power that coexists with tenderness — and of what it means to grow up fighting, but not to become consumed by the fight.

Mad Bounty and The Midnight Gun

Genre: Western
Country: Uganda
Language: English, Runyoro, Luganda
Status: In Development

Logline

In 1885, Western Uganda, outlaw Mad Bounty hunts the British commander who killed his mother only to uncover the Midnight Gun, a native weapon of raw power. To claim it, he must outwit the British and rival factions.

Synopsis

With a reputation as heavy as the bounty on his head, Mad Bounty is a hardened outlaw driven by one desperate goal — to save his dying mother. Armed with only a revolver, he risks everything to steal a shipment of rare blue diamonds — the only payment demanded by a reclusive healer who might lift the death curse killing her. But the heist goes sideways.

After learning of another way to save her, Mad Bounty rides home — only to find his mother dead and his village reduced to ashes by the British, led by the ruthless General Hargarth, in their hunt for the Midnight Gun — a native weapon of raw power.

She died protecting a secret tied to his father, who vanished years earlier searching for the same weapon. Consumed by rage, Mad Bounty joins J.J., a bounty hunter who shares his thirst for revenge. Together they race the British, rival bounty hunters, and outlaws to find the Midnight Gun — only to discover it isn't a weapon, but his vanished father, now guardian of an ancient force called 'Busobozi'.

Can Mad Bounty let go of his pain while still protecting what matters most?



TALEMWA PIUS

WRITER



Talemwa Pius is a Ugandan screenwriter and director who uses genre storytelling to reclaim African narratives, subvert stereotypes, and expand how the continent is portrayed in cinema. He is an alumnus of the New York Film Academy, a 2025 Talents Durban participant, and a fellow of the Red Sea Labs Directors Program (mentored by Spike Lee), the Red Sea SeriesLab, and the Swiss–South African AuthenticA Series Lab. His work spans Westerns, horror, and folklore—using genre to confront reductive portrayals and reframe African identity on screen.

TUSABE IVAN

CO-WRITER



Tusabe Ivan is a Ugandan screenwriter and director, an alumnus of Multichoice Talent Factory and New York Film Academy. He started as a writer for Kyaddala Season 2 and has since written First Eleven and the Kalasha award-winning Kenyan musical, Cheza, both streaming on Showmax. His directorial debut, Scam Club, was nominated at the Uganda Film Festival. Tusabe's latest project is the award-winning short film, Jimbi. He is a fellow of Red Sea SeriesLab, DW Akademie development fund, and the Red Sea Director's programme, mentored by Spike Lee.

Writer's Statement

This story comes from a deeply personal place. When I was four, my mother passed away. My father, though alive, was absent, leaving a void in my family and in my sense of belonging. I grew up with a deep need to connect with my roots. Uganda, like many nations that endured colonial rule, has lost pieces of its identity. Stories of resistance were erased or rewritten by outsiders.

With "Mad Bounty & The Midnight Gun", I'm reclaiming those narratives, reinventing the Western, and adapting it to a land unlike any other. It's about the human cost of ambition, how the past shapes the present, and how history repeats itself when unacknowledged. Colonialism may be gone, but its impact remains — as does the heritage of those who came before us. My ancestors were legends — warriors, gods of war, keepers of power, and their history runs in my blood.

Money Town

Genre: Comedy
Country: Kenya
Language: Swahili & English
Status: In Development

Logline

When a tech millionaire showers free money on a humble Kenyan village once held together by cups of borrowed sugar, all hell breaks loose, and only shrewd but illiterate Lel can keep the madness from boiling over.

Synopsis

Lel (60s) is everyone's grandmother—loving, blunt, and now the reluctant Headman of a tiny Kenyan village. There's just one problem: she can't read. She's spent her life being useful, fixing everyone else's problems so no one discovers what she can't do for herself.

Enter Bruce (25), a Kenyan-American tech millionaire with a God complex and a Universal Basic Income grant. He's giving every resident \$200 a month. Overnight, the village transforms: the priest mines Bitcoin, the headmaster DJs full-time, and women leave loveless marriages. Essential work goes undone as everyone chases dreams they'd buried decades ago.

Worse, the sudden wealth convinces people they no longer need each other. Village bonds fray. Neighbors become rivals.

Meanwhile, Lel is drowning in daily disputes and Bruce's bureaucratic chaos—permits, land titles, taxes, Excel spreadsheets—all things she can't read. She lies, improvises, even traps a government official in a pigsty to buy time. She'll do anything to keep her village from falling apart. But there are only so many lies—and so many pigsties.

"Money Town" is a half-hour comedy in the spirit of "Schitt's Creek", "The Big Door Prize", and "Doc Martin": prosperity, pride, and one woman holding it all together.



TONY KOROS

WRITER, DIRECTOR



Tony Koros was raised in Nairobi on Bible studies, Hollywood movies, and Mexican telenovelas. Now based in Los Angeles, he writes comedies about people striving to belong in places that weren't made for them. A 2021 Sundance Screenwriters & Directors Lab Fellow and recipient of the Tribeca Sloan Grant, his honors include fellowships from Cine Qua Non Lab and AuthenticA, and grants from the Martin E. Segal Foundation and the Hollywood Foreign Press Association. His short *Tithes & Offerings* premiered at Clermont-Ferrand and is being developed into a feature through the Venice Biennale College Cinema.

TONI KAMAU

PRODUCER



Toni Kamau is a Peabody-nominated Kenyan producer and writer who grew up without television until the age of seven. Her viewing options were limited to BBC, CNN, and Monty Python reruns. Like many kids raised on imported stories, she once believed Africa began with colonization—an idea that now fuels her mission to tell African stories with nuance, beauty, and bite. She is the founder of *We Are Not the Machine*, the company behind acclaimed features including *"Softie"* (Sundance 2020) and *"The Battle for Laikipia"* (Sundance 2024). Working globally across fiction and non-fiction, Toni is a member of AMPAS and the Producers Guild of America.

Writer's Statement

I worry about money constantly. The lack of it shapes where I live, how I spend my time, and who I keep close. It makes me anxious and small. Sometimes I forget about it for a moment and feel light, but it never lasts.

What if money wasn't a concern? Not just for me, but for an entire community. That's the heart of "Money Town", a show about a small village suddenly given everything it needs and more.

When survival is no longer the struggle, who do people become? Do they still rely on one another, or does comfort make connection optional?

In a world divided by wealth, "Money Town" asks whether abundance brings us closer or quietly pulls us apart. It suggests that compassion and community can't be bought—they are choices we make every day, regardless of what we have.

Side Effects

Genre: Drama, Thriller
Country: Egypt
Language: Arabic
Status: In Development

Logline

When brilliant but disgraced neurosurgeon Nadia returns to Cairo to sell her late father's hospital, she finds the once-respected community institution on the brink of collapse, and her sister Samya accused of killing a young patient. With the hospital's future and their own freedom on the line, the estranged sisters must stop fighting long enough to save the place that has saved so many others, before it's too late.

Synopsis

When brilliant but disgraced doctor Nadia returns to Cairo, she's not coming home out of love, she's broke. Nadia plans to sell her late father's hospital, take the money, and start over. But what she finds is a place in chaos. The once-respected community hospital, a lifeline for the surrounding neighborhood, is barely holding on. Supplies are late, staff is underpaid, systems are broken. And at the center of it all is Nadia's estranged sister Samya, a gynecologist who's been keeping the place afloat through sheer stubbornness and personal sacrifice.

As Nadia clashes with Samya over the hospital's future, an urgent case lands in their laps: a teenage rape survivor seeks an illegal abortion in a country where her choices are limited by both law and culture. The sisters make a fateful decision to help her, but when the girl winds up dead, they need to find out what happened. Are they responsible? Or did someone murder her?

Throughout the episodes, Side Effects explores the messy intersection of medicine, family, class, and gender in contemporary Egypt. Each episode follows Nadia and Samya as they confront moral, legal, and personal crises inside the hospital's walls while battling old wounds that resurface between them. With the hospital's fate hanging in the balance, the sisters must decide whether to heal their fractured bond, or let the weight of legacy, shame, and systemic rot pull them both under.



HIND METWALLI

WRITER



Hind is an Egyptian filmmaker with a background in development, writing, and directing. She holds an MFA from USC's School of Cinematic Arts and began her career at Captivate Entertainment in Los Angeles, working on the Bourne franchise. She later spent three years as a Film and TV Development Executive at Mohamed Hefzy's Film Clinic. Hind's short film The Interview, which she wrote, directed, and produced, premiered at Cairo International Film Festival, and her produced short Qafla (Blackout) screened at Tampere and Palm Springs ShortFest. She also holds an MPA from LSE, has worked in finance and consulting in London, and trained as an actor at The Royal Central School and with Michael Chekhov Europe.

AHMED ELZOGHBY

CO-WRITER



Ahmed ElZoghby is an Egyptian screenwriter, director, and producer. A Film Independent Global Media Makers Fellow, his original screenplay won five awards at the Cairo International Film Festival. He co-wrote the Saudi film Hajjan, which premiered at Toronto and Red Sea Film Festivals, and Bershama (2025), directed by Khaled Diab. Ahmed spent three years as a development executive at Mohamed Hefzy's Film Clinic, where he honed his skills in story development, packaging, and financing. He co-founded Cima, a film school that hosted workshops with Mohamed Diab, Yousry Nasrallah, and Daoud Abdelsayed. His directorial debut short Qafla (Blackout) screened at Tampere and Palm Springs ShortFest. Originally from Port Said, Ahmed is a self-taught filmmaker whose grassroots journey—from AD on Clash (Cannes) to international labs—shapes his distinctive storytelling voice.

Writer's Statement

As an Egyptian woman, I want to tell this story because it speaks to the complex reality of women navigating systems that were never built for them. Side Effects is not just a medical drama, it's about power, silence, and the impossible choices people are forced to make when institutions fail. Through Nadia and Samya, I'm exploring how two women confront a system that is both deeply broken and deeply needed by their community. I grew up around hospitals and stories like Fatma's are tragically common but rarely told. This series gives those stories space to breathe. It's a way to hold a mirror to society, not just to show what's broken, but to ask what it takes to fix it, and who pays the price when we don't.

Society

Genre:
Country:
Language:
Status:

Drama, Thriller
India
Hindi
In Development

Logline

At Delhi University's fiercest theatre society, two estranged brothers clash over ideology while struggling under the shadow of their martyred artist-activist father. As real-world unrest seeps onto campus life, they must decide whether performance is the only way they can contribute to a revolution.

Synopsis

At The Thespians, Delhi University's prestigious theatre society, theatre isn't just art, it's a battlefield. "Society" follows estranged brothers Keshav and Kashi, living under the shadow of their late father, an artist-activist who was shot on stage for performing an anti-establishment play.

Keshav is a rising star within the elite society, while Kashi, a defiant freshman, auditions against his family's wishes. Both aim to honor their father's legacy, but while Keshav's methods are measured and diplomatic, Kashi brings a bold, rebellious energy that disrupts the hierarchy.

As they navigate rivalry, personal trauma, and the pressures of the society, real-world politics seep onto campus. Through Anoushka, a fellow member and the daughter of an investigative journalist, Kashi connects with a distressed refugee community and begins using theatre as a tool for resistance. He breaks away from The Thespians and forms his own street theatre troupe with the society's outcasts.

After they perform a street play outside the Chief Minister's residence, the refugee camps are bulldozed, worsening conditions for the people Kashi sought to help. Drawn into a deeper conspiracy, The Thespians are branded a security threat. As events escalate, the brothers must confront their ambitions, loyalties, and the true power of art.

The season builds to a high-stakes climax where performance becomes revolution. Kashi names his movement – Anti-Society.



SUSHANT NAGPAL

WRITER



Sushant Nagpal is a filmmaker and theatre director from Haryana, India. His work blends magical realism with absurdity, often exploring themes like consumerism, sensationalism, and myth in contemporary life. Sushant has directed acclaimed plays and short films including Art by Yasmina Reza, The Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka and short film Barber of the Gods. A trained IB educator, he has taught theatre for over four years. Sushant was recently awarded with a JCS International Emmy's Award for a short film.

MAYANK SHANDILYA

CO-WRITER



Mayank Shandilya, born in Delhi and raised amid Bollywood marathons and street food, shifted from studying Science to Performing Arts at Delhi University before embracing filmmaking. Now based in Mumbai, he writes and directs short films, commercials, and assists on feature scripts. Fascinated by absurdism, thrillers, and fractured identities, Mayank crafts dark, compelling narratives. With a TV pilot and a feature in development, he spends his free time immersed in movies, MMA, cricket and yearning for mountain getaways.

Writer's Statement

Society is a coming of age-theatre group drama emerging from my firsthand experience in an elite theatre society. I have closely observed its methods, ambitions, and hypocrisies, and I am fascinated by how young artists, passionate about their craft, navigate politics both on and off stage. This tension between art and activism drives the narrative. Set in today's India, where artists can be casually labelled 'anti-national,' the environment is intensely political both on and off campus. The characters begin to behave like politicians themselves, giving the series the sensibilities of a political thriller. Society examines what happens when too many ambitious people share the same roof, and how they react when the protective bubble of an insular, idealistic environment bursts.

Till Death Do Us Part

Genre: Psychological Thriller, Mystery, Supernatural Drama
Country: Nigeria
Language: English, Benin, Pidgin English
Status: In Development

Logline

A grieving woman defies an ancient rule to see her dead husband one last time, tearing open the veil between life and death and awakening something on the other side that has come to collect what is owed.

Synopsis

Isoken Adeyemi has finally built the life she always dreamed of: a thriving career, a loving marriage, and has just discovered she's expecting a baby. But one morning, she wakes to find her husband dead.

Grief drives her to a mysterious funeral home in Benin, rumored to let the living cross into the realm of the dead for one minute. The rules are absolute: one goes, one returns, or none do. And under no circumstance must she touch the dead.

Isoken is warned that the crossing may cost her unborn child. Still, she goes. In the moment that matters most, she breaks the rule and yet doesn't stay behind. Instead, she returns with Michael, alive. No one, not even the priestess, understands how.

As Michael begins to unravel, shadows twist, mirrors distort, and a figure who looks exactly like Isoken appears. The priestess uncovers the truth: years ago, Isoken's mother traded the life of her twin sister to save her. By defying death again, Isoken has cracked the veil between worlds.

Now, her sister is back, not for a reunion but revenge.

Isoken must face the consequences and ask herself: how many lives must be lost to avoid saying goodbye?



TOMI FOLOWOSELE

WRITER, DIRECTOR



Tomi Folowosele is a filmmaker and screenwriter whose stories live where the surreal meets the deeply human. Her work explores love, grief, and memory through characters caught between worlds, emotional and otherwise. Her debut short film, *Hours Before*, which she wrote, produced, and starred in, screened to critical acclaim at international festivals. She later served as Head Writer on two MNET Original Series in Africa, one of which won the 2024 AMVCA for Best Indigenous Series in Africa. She is currently developing her feature film. A Red Sea Series Lab and Talent Durban fellow, Tomi brings an unflinching honesty to her storytelling. When she's not writing, she's likely learning Sign Language, singing karaoke, or discussing cultural myths. She believes the best stories linger long after the screen fades to black.

ORIRE, NWANI

PRODUCER



Orire Nwani is an award-winning Nigerian filmmaker and prolific series producer with a track record for delivering ambitious, large-scale productions. As Creative Director at Conceptified Media, his work spans film, television, and branded storytelling featured on Netflix, Prime Video, CNN, Showmax, and the Smithsonian Museum. He directed *Grind Season 2* (2025) on Prime Video and *Tales of Ramadan* for Maggi Nigeria. A 2025 Red Sea Series Lab Fellow, Orire champions bold, emotionally resonant African stories for global audiences.

Writer's Statement

"I wish I could bring him back, just for a moment, to ask how he truly died." That was six-year-old me to my sister after our father passed. Since then, I've been drawn to that quiet space between life and memory. *Till Death Do Us Part* comes from that space.

It's about how love can make us reach across the line between life and death, even when we shouldn't. Through Isoken, I wanted to explore the ache of longing, and how holding on can sometimes blur the line between remembrance and reality.

At its heart, this is a story about our fear of endings and the beautiful, dangerous ways we try to rewrite them.

STUDIOS



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THE MINIMUM GUARANTEE IN EXCHANGE FOR DISTRIBUTION & SALES RIGHTS WORLDWIDE IS WORTH **\$50,000.**

NOTE FROM THE RED SEA FUND



As we celebrate five years of the Red Sea Fund, we take great pride in the incredible journey that began in 2021. Over this time, the Fund has supported more than 340 projects from over 66 countries across the Arab world, Africa and Asia—stories that have captivated audiences, won major awards, and amplified the region's cinematic voice on the global stage.

In 2025, as we mark this five-year milestone, we are thrilled to expand our reach into Asia, continuing our mission to foster a vibrant community of filmmakers and strengthen creative exchange across continents.

The impact of the Fund is reflected not only in the films it supports but also in how it positions Saudi Arabia as a true hub of film production—credited as a “country of production” in leading festivals such as Cannes, Venice, Berlin, Sundance, and TIFF. Among the many success stories are “All That’s Left Of You”, “A Sad And Beautiful World”, “Happy Birthday”, “Hijra”, “Palestine 36”, “Promised Sky”, “The Heart is a Muscle”, and “The Voice Of Hind Rajab”—each making waves across the international festival circuit and representing their countries at the Academy Awards.

We take particular pride in the international recognition these films continue to bring to the region—from Sundance to Venice, Cannes to Toronto—affirming the Fund’s role in nurturing Arab, African, and now Asian cinema, while empowering new voices that define our shared cinematic future. This strategy of fostering cross-cultural collaboration—bringing international filmmakers to Saudi Arabia and supporting Saudi voices on global stages—is already bearing remarkable results, far sooner than anticipated. Saudi films such as “Norah” (Cannes, 2023) and “Hijra” (Venice, 2025), both supported by the Fund, exemplify this success, showcasing the power of authentic storytelling that resonates beyond borders.

The Red Sea Fund is equally proud to continue supporting the Souk Project Market through the Red Sea Souk and Labs Awards, helping projects transition from development to production, post-production, and ultimately to international acclaim.

With great honor, we present to you the 2025 Fund films touring the world as Oscars selections—a testament to five years of passion, progress, and partnership shaping the new home of film.

Emad Eskander
Director of the Red Sea Fund

RED SEA FUND FILMS TOURING THE WORLD

01

ALL THAT'S LEFT OF YOU



Festival Selections:

Sundance Film Festival

Telluride Film Festival

Jordan's official submission to the Academy Awards

Funded In: Production Cycle 2022

02

A SAD AND BEAUTIFUL WORLD



Festival Selections:

Venice Film Festival

BFI London Film Festival

Lebanon's official submission to the Academy Awards

Funded In: Production Cycle 2023

03

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Festival Selections:

Tribeca Film Festival

El Gouna Film Festival

Egypt's official submission to the Academy Awards

Funded In: Production Cycle 2023

04

HIJRA



Festival Selections:

Venice Film Festival

Saudi Arabia's official submission to the Academy Awards

Funded In: Production Cycle 2023

05

PALESTINE 36



Festival Selections:

TIFF

BFI London Film Festival

Palestine's official submission to the Academy Awards

Funded in: Development Cycle 2021

06

THE HEART IS A MUSCLE



Festival Selections:

Berlin Film Festival

South Africa's official submission to the Academy Awards

Support Details: Postproduction Cycle 2024

07

THE VOICE OF HIND RAJAB



Festival Selections:

Venice Film Festival

Busan Film Festival

Tunisia's official submission to the Academy Awards

Support Details: Oscar Campaign 2025

01

Director: Cherien Dabis

Producer: Thanassis Karathanos – Cherien Dabis – Martin Hampel – Karim Amer

Country: Germany, Greece, Jordan, Cyprus and Palestine, Saudi Arabia

02

Director: Cyril Aris

Producers: Georges Schoucair – Jennifer Goyne Blake – April Shih – Georg Neubert – Jasper Wiechöft

Country: Lebanon, USA, Germany, Saudi Arabia and Qatar

03

Director: Sarah Goher

Producer: Ahmed El Desouki

Country: Saudi Arabia, Egypt

04

Director: Shahad Ameen

Producers: Mohamed Jabarah Al-Daradji

Country: Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Egypt and United Kingdom

05

Director: Annemarie Jacir

Producer: Ossama Bawardi

Country: Palestine, United Kingdom, France, Denmark, Norway, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Jordan

06

Director: Imran Hamdulay

Producer: Khosie Dali

Country: South Africa, Saudi Arabia

07

Director: Kaouther Ben Hania

Producers: Nadim Cheikhrouha – Odessa Rae – James Wilson

Country: Tunisia, France



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RBG, A PLASTIC OCEAN MIRIAM CUTLER CYBERPUNK 2077, MAESTRO IN BLUE KID MOXIE
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THANKS TO OUR TEAMS

01

Souk Team

Souk Exhibitions Team



HOLLY DANIEL

Red Sea Souk
Director



RAGHAD KORAYEM

Exhibition Sales Lead



ZAIN ZEDAN

Souk Operations
Manager



LAURA MUFTI

Souk Exhibitions Sales
Executive



ANOOS SADAYO

Souk Operations
Lead



AYMAN AL GHAMDI

Souk Exhibitions Sales
Executive



MOAIYD ALSHAMMARI

Communication
Lead



TARA TAWFIQ

Souk Exhibitions Sales
Coordinator



ZAKI WARDAH

Souk Accreditation
Coordinator

Project Market Team



CENDRELLA ABI GERGES

Project Market Program
Manager



WIM VANACKER

Head of Selection Committee
Manager & Coach, Editing
Workshop



SIZA ZAYED

Production Manager,
Projects-in-Development



NANCY HAMDY

Production Manager
Works-in-Progress &
SeriesLab



NADIN ALYASSIN

Project Market Coordinator
Projects-in-Development



NORA AHMED

Project Market Senior
Coordinator
Work-in-Progress



SARAH ALNASSER

Project Market
Coordinator



JANA TARABZONI

Project Market
Coordinator

THANKS TO OUR TEAMS

02

Souk Talents Team

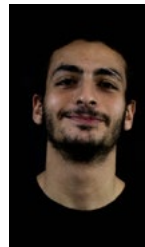
Souk Talks Team



ALICE KHAROUBI
Souk Talents Manager
Shorts & Family Programmer



WENDY MITCHELL
Souk Talks Curator



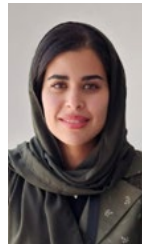
YAR MEKHTIGIAN
Souk Talents &
Souk Connections
Senior Coordinator



MARLIN SOLIMAN
Souk Talks & Events Manager



HAKIM MAO
Souk Talents & Souk
Connections Coordinator



ARWA ALTOUKHI
Souk Talks & Events
Coordinator



AHMED WAHEEB HAMDAD
Souk Talents Lead



FAHAD IBRAHIM MULHIYAH
Souk Talks & Events
Coordinator

Red Sea Labs Team



RYAN ASHORE
Director of Red Sea Labs



HUDA BATTERJEE
Red Sea Labs
Manager



LAYAN ALHADHRAMI
Partners and
Communication Lead



DUR JAMJOOM
Submission Analyst



CARL RUMBAUGH
Red Sea Labs Consultant



DIALA GHOUTH
Program Follow-up Analyst



HAIDER RASHID
Red Sea Labs Consultant



SÉVERINE TIBI
Program Consultant

THANKS TO OUR TEAMS

03

Red Sea Fund Team



EMAD ESKANDAR
Red Sea Fund Director



MAI ALSHAIBANI
Initiative Lead



MUNTHIR ALTUWAIREB
Contract Lead



SALMAN ALMUSAAD
Submissions Senior Analyst



GHAIDAA ALSURAYHI
Project Assessment Analyst



MOHAMMED JUSTANIAH
Cycle Management Lead

RED SEA SOUK SCHEDULE AND MAP

To view the Souk Schedule, please scan the QR code below



To view the Souk Exhibition map, please scan the QR code below:





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