

Doha Film Institute Grants Programme 2014

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**Film Funding
Doha Film Institute Grants
Programme
2014-15**

This year marks the Doha Film Institute's fifth year of supporting film culture in Qatar and around the world. Over this time, our Grants Programme initiative has been a core activity through which we have supported more than 200 projects from the MENA region and, more recently, from the rest of the world.

These films are a constant source of inspiration and we are proud to have contributed to bringing so many worthwhile projects to fruition. Our 2014 crop of grant recipients is no exception.

As a result of the two deliberation sessions conducted in 2014, we have funded 42 upcoming projects by first- and second-time filmmakers from 33 countries, all of which reflect compelling new voices in world cinema.

Highlighting the steady forward strides being made by the film industry in Qatar, we welcome six projects by filmmakers in our home country. For the first time, we have awarded grants to filmmakers from Italy, Madagascar, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines and the USA. Our commitment to cinema coming from the MENA region remains strong. Our funding structure has categories and criteria in place that apply specifically to the nations of the Arab world, underlining our founding mission to support voices from our region.

As we continue to grow this international community of filmmakers through our funding programmes, we are also expanding opportunities for professional and creative development for our grantees through new initiatives like Qumra and other year-round support mechanisms for the industry.

Our commitment to these films extends much further than a one-time grant - we are dedicated to supporting filmmakers for the life-cycle of their current projects and, in many cases, into their next.

I am deeply honoured to welcome our newest grant recipients to the Doha Film Institute family, and I look forward to witnessing their development over the coming years.

- Fatma Al Remaihi
CEO, Doha Film Institute

**Doha Film Institute
Grants Team**

Hanaa Issa, Director of Strategy & Development

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Vanessa Paradis, Grants Assistant

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Feature Narrative

- Birdshot
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- They
- To All Naked Men
- True Love Story
- Under the Shadow
- White Sun

Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2014

Mikhail Red

Director / Screenwriter



Rae Red

Screenwriter



Pamela Reyes

Producer



Contact

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Birdshot

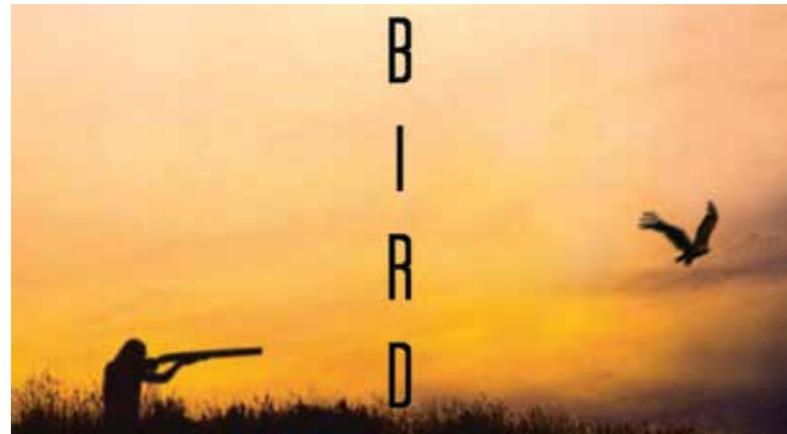
The Philippines, Qatar / Filipino / 2016

Runtime: 85 min

Genre: Based on a True Story, Drama

Interests: Coming-of-age, Drama, Environmental, Psychological, Social Issues, Youth

A farm girl mistakenly shoots and kills an endangered Philippine Eagle. When authorities begin a manhunt to track down the eagle's killer, they stumble upon an even more horrific discovery.



Fifteen-year-old Maya works with her father on an isolated farm in the Philippines. While venturing deep into the mountains, she spots an endangered Philippine Eagle, a protected national symbol, in the forest. Maya shoots and kills the bird. Unaware of her crime, she brings the carcass home, hoping to prove herself to her father. Soon after, authorities start a manhunt to find the eagle killer. During the investigation, the inept local police stumble upon another disturbing case involving an abandoned passenger bus in the middle of nowhere. Meanwhile Maya's father is arrested, and Maya eludes the police by hiding in the forest. She hears the call of an eagle; she follows the sound, which leads her to a grim discovery.

Director's Note

In 2008, a news article about a man shooting and eating a critically endangered Philippine Eagle circulated. The prime suspect was a young farmer. This crime is punishable by up to 12 years in prison or a fine of up to USD23,000. This news made me ponder how protecting a national symbol fit into the bigger picture of Filipino society. The next year, the infamous Maguindanao massacre took place, when 34 journalists and civilians were slain due to a political dispute. I realized at that moment that, like the eagles, our freedom as citizens is endangered. I want to conserve it, before it vanishes. Just like the eagles, we Filipinos are here struggling - endangered, perhaps, but far from extinct.

Director's Biography

Mikhail Red is a Filipino independent filmmaker based in Manila. He has participated in numerous film workshops and has been involved in several commercial and motion picture productions. He has written, edited and directed six short films, all of which have been in competition and won awards at international film festivals. At the age of 21, he completed his first award-winning feature-length film entitled 'Rekorder', which was screened in more than 10 international film festivals. At 22, he won the Best New Director award at the 2014 Vancouver International Film Festival.

Company Profile

PelikulaRED is the production arm of Filipino independent filmmakers Mikhail Red and Raymond Red. Pamela L. Reyes serves as producer for the company. PelikulaRED is primarily engaged in the production of feature films, short films, commercials and music videos. The company provides production services, co-production, and partnerships for distribution and exhibition.

Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Spring 2014

Katia Jarjoura

Director / Screenwriter



Antoine de Clermont-Tonnerre

Producer



Days of Tyranny

Lebanon, France, Canada, Qatar / Arabic / 2016

Runtime: 90 min

Genre: Drama, Thriller

Interests: Psychological, War

Iraq, 1985, during dictatorship and war. In a village, a housewife is hiding her brother behind the walls of the living room. Until, one day, her husband returns from the war...



A village on the outskirts of the Iraqi desert, 1985. The Iran-Iraq war is raging all around, and Saddam Hussein's tyrannical regime is spreading fear among the people. Deserters are executed; opponents tortured. Hunted down by security agents for desertion, Jawad, a poet, has shut himself away in a tiny cell adjacent to his sister Hana's living room. A courageous wife and mother, Hana takes daily risks to feed Jawad via a tunnel that runs from the henhouse. Jawad's whereabouts are kept secret, even from Hana's children, who rely solely on her while their father Abbas is away at war. No one is to be trusted in this country where everyone spies on each other. Soon after a wounded Abbas returns unexpectedly from the frontline, tensions flare and the family's already vulnerable situation becomes unbearable.

Contact

Katia Jarjoura

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Director's Note

'Days of Tyranny' is based on a true story. In 2003, I met Jawad Amer Sayyed in a village south of Baghdad. A political opponent of Saddam Hussein, he had deserted the army during the Iran-Iraq War but instead of going into exile, he incarcerated himself between two walls of his family house and remained there for more than 20 years. Nobody knew of his presence, apart from his mother who fed him daily. In my view, this story embodies the legacy of fear visited by Saddam's dictatorship on its people and, by extension, on all people victimised by dictatorship. It proves that the act of resistance can be achieved by means other than weapons and, moreover, it shows the power of unconditional love and a woman's sacrifice in times of tyranny.

Director's Biography

A Lebanese-Canadian filmmaker, **Katia Jarjoura** has directed several television documentaries in the Middle East, including 'Goodbye Mubarak' (2011), 'The Road to Kerbala' (2004) and 'Caught in Between' (2002), which were screened and broadcast worldwide. Her work focuses on war-torn countries - among them Iraq, Iran, Palestine and Lebanon - where she portrays people caught in the midst of political turmoil. She has also written several screenplays; her first short film, 'In their Blood' (2009), won the France 2 Award at the Brest Film Festival. 'Days of Tyranny' is her first feature-length film.

Company Profile

MACT Production was founded by Antoine and Martine de Clermont-Tonnerre in 1992. Based in Paris, it is one of the leading production companies in France for art-house and international films. Over the years, MACT has produced or co-produced more than 40 award-winning feature and documentary films, which have been distributed worldwide. To name a few: Walter Salles's 'Central Station' (1998); Goran Paskaljevic's 'Cabaret Balkan' (1998); Raoul Ruiz's 'Comedy of Innocence' (2000); Eugène Green's 'Le Pont des Arts' (2004); Eran Riklis's 'Lemon Tree' (2006); and Fabio Grassadonia and Antonio Piazza's 'Salvo' (2013). More recently, MACT has contributed to the development and production of Palestinian projects, among them Rani Massalha's 'Giraffada' (2013) and Najwa Najjar's 'Eyes of a Thief' (2014).

Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Spring 2014

Mariam Khatchvani

Director / Screenwriter



Vladimer Katcharava

Producer



Dede

Georgia, Qatar / Georgian / 2016

Runtime: 90 min

Genre: Drama

In the Svaneti region of the Caucasus mountains in Georgia, strict social laws force mothers to abandon their children.



In the harsh, mountainous countryside of the Georgian region of Svaneti, a woman falls in love. She marries in defiance of both her family's wishes and her clan's code of honour. But her happiness is brief and the love of her life dies. Tradition dictates that she must marry the first man to offer her his hand...

Contact

20 Steps Productions

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Director's Note

I have decided to retell the history of my region – a history that has never been revealed before, a history related to my ancestors. I have constructed the narrative based on real stories my family members have told me. “Who knows how many hours I stood hiding behind the fence, frozen in snow, waiting to see my mother,” my grandmother used to say, in tears. “My mother was the most beautiful lady in the village, she was asked to marry five times,” said my grandmother’s half-sister – her mother’s last child, she was never abandoned. In a society where the heads of families make the rules, many children were brought up as though they were orphans. They blame their mothers; their mothers blame tradition.

Director's Biography

Mariam Khatchvani was born in Georgia in 1986. She studied film directing at the Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film State University. She has directed numerous short documentaries, including ‘Verdzoba’ (2006), ‘Beyond the Window’ (2007) and ‘Lichanishi and Kvirikoba’ (2009). ‘Dinola’, her first narrative short, has been screened at several film festivals.

Company Profile

20 Steps Productions is an independent production company founded in Tbilisi in 2010. The company’s goal is to contribute to the development of the film industry in Georgia. 20 Steps focuses on developing and co-producing independent feature, documentary and animation films that will appeal both to domestic and international audiences. Films currently in post-production include Mohsen Makhmalbaf’s ‘President’ and Ben Hopkins’s ‘Welcome to Darastan’, while Mariam Khachvani’s ‘Dede’ is in pre-production. Completed films include Besik Solomanashvili’s ‘Detonator’ (short; 2013), Sandro Katamashvili’s ‘Granny’ (short; 2013) and Mariam Khachvani’s ‘Dinola’ (short; 2013).

Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2014

Arab & Tarzan Abunasser

Director / Screenwriter



Rani Massalha, Rashid Abdelhamid, Marie Legrand

Producer



Dégradé

Palestine, France, Qatar / Arabic / 2015

Runtime: 85 min

Genre: Comedy, Drama

Interests: Social Issues, Women's Interest

Exhibition Format: DCP 2K

Gaza, nowadays. Twelve women are stuck in a hair salon for a whole afternoon, witnessing a violent confrontation taking place across the street.



A hot summer's day in the Gaza Strip. Today the electricity is on. Christine's beauty salon is heaving with female clients: a bitter divorcée, a religious woman, a lunatic addicted to prescription drugs, a young bride-to-be accompanied by her asthmatic mother and her quarrelsome mother-in-law, and a very pregnant woman, among others. But their day of leisure is disrupted when gunfire breaks out across the street. A gangland family has stolen the lion from Gaza's only zoo, and Hamas police forces have decided it's time to settle old scores. Stuck in the salon, with the prospect of death drawing ever nearer, the women start to unravel. How will the day end? Will they lose their lives for the sake of 'liberating the lion'?

Contact

Les Films du Tambour

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Director's Note

Our work draws inspiration from the tragedy and absurdity that has befallen Palestine, and the desire to alert the collective international conscience to the living conditions of our society. 'Dégradé' is based on a true story that made headlines in 2007, when "Operation Liberate the Lioness" was launched by the Hamas-led government against one of the most powerful families in the Gaza Strip. It ended in armed confrontation. 'Dégradé' provides a space for 12 women of different ages and with different social backgrounds, to talk freely about their lives. Using dark humour to describe a situation in which, by extrapolation, an entire population is trapped, the film draws a portrait of a society whose members are caught between a military occupation and internal divisions.

Director's Biography

Filmmakers and identical twin brothers **Tarzan and Arab** were born in Gaza in 1988. In 2010, they received the A.M. Qattan Foundation's prestigious Young Artist of the Year Award for their conceptual artwork 'Gazawood', a series of mock-Hollywood posters for imaginary feature films named after real Israeli military offensives on Gaza. That same year, they directed the short film 'Colourful Journey', which had its premiere at the Rotterdam International Film Festival. In 2013, they directed the short 'Condom Lead', which appeared in official competition at the Festival de Cannes. 'Dégradé' is their first feature-length film.

Company Profile

Created in 2014 by Marie Legrand and Rani Massalha, **Les Films du Tambour** is a French production company based in Paris. The company is interested in discovering and following international directors presenting innovative stories with strong and unique cinematographic visions that have a potential for the international market. 'Dégradé', by Arab and Tarzan Abunasser, is the first feature film produced by Les Films du Tambour, in coproduction with Made in Palestine Project. The company currently has five international projects in development.

In 2012, Rashid Abdelhamid founded **Made in Palestine Project**, an independent arts initiative to create and promote contemporary visual art with a focus on Palestine, in collaboration with twin Gazan filmmakers Tarzan and Arab. In 2013, he produced and acted in the short film 'Condom Lead', which featured in the short film competition at the Festival de Cannes. Abdelhamid is currently producing two feature films from Tarzan and Arab: 'Casting', currently in development; and 'Dégradé', which is in post-production.

Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Spring 2014

Emin Alper

Director / Screenwriter



Enis Köstepen, Nadir Öperli, Cem Doruk

Producer



Frenzy

'Kadir Ve Kardesleri' / Turkey, France, Qatar / Turkish / 2015

Runtime: 100 min

Genre: Drama, Thriller

Interests: Politics

Exhibition Format: DCP

Istanbul is in political chaos. Armed groups have taken control of the shantytowns. The police response is brutal. In the midst of this, two brothers are drawn into the violence.



Kadir is released after a 15-year prison term and goes in search of his younger brother Ahmet. Meanwhile, Istanbul is in the grip of political violence. Hamza, a high-ranking police officer helps Kadir find a job as an informer. He collects garbage, checking to see whether it contains material related to bomb-making. Ahmet works at the municipality as part of a team responsible for destroying stray dogs. When Ahmet shuts himself up in his house to care for a wounded dog, Kadir thinks he is being threatened by terrorists. Kadir relays his concern to Hamza, who sends the police to investigate.

Contact

Liman Film

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Director's Note

'Frenzy' tells how the political system turns "little men" into parts of its violent mechanism by providing them with authority and the instruments of violence. Whether this violence is directed at stray dogs or terrorists, these men follow orders – whether to fulfil their dreams or just to make a living. They are indifferent to the effects of their activities. Such ignorance is indeed their own choice. The tragic element of the story is driven both by political conditions and the characters' own choices. However, these instruments turn against themselves, as an outcome of their own paranoia.

Director's Biography

Born in 1974, **Emin Alper** was trained in Economics and History and holds a Ph.D in Modern Turkish History. His first feature, 'Beyond the Hill' (2012), received numerous awards, including the Caligari Film Prize from the Berlin International Film Festival; it was named Best Film in the Asia Pacific Screen Awards. Alper also wrote and directed the short films 'Rifat' (2006) and 'The Letter' (2005). He teaches in the Humanities and Social Sciences Department at Istanbul Technical University.

Company Profile

Following his experience in founding Bulut Film, where he produced Seyfi Teoman's 'Summer Book' (2008) and 'Our Grand Despair' (2011), Theron Patterson's 'Dark Cloud' (2009) and Asli Ozge's 'Lifelong' (2013), Nadir Öperli founded his own company, **Liman Film**, in 2012. The company offers project development and producer services to director-producers, and produces its own projects. Currently, Liman's slate includes Emine Emel Balcı's 'Until I Lose My Breath' (2015), Semih Kaplanoğlu's 'Grain' (in post-production) and Emin Alper's 'Frenzy'.

Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Spring 2014

Jonas Selberg Augustsén

Director / Screenwriter



Andreas Emanuelsson

Producer



Contact

Bob Film Sweden AB

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The Garbage Helicopter

'Sophelikoptern' / Sweden, Qatar / Romani, Swedish / 2015

Runtime: 99 min

Genre: Drama

Exhibition Format: DCP 2K

Three young adults on a journey. Their goal: to return an old wall clock to their grandmother. A story about a minor mission that becomes a major journey.



Somewhere in Sweden, a gigantic dumpster breaks loose from the heavy chain suspending it from a large helicopter. The dumpster hits the ground and garbage spews everywhere. Meanwhile, an aging Roma woman wakes up with a powerful longing. Her old wall clock has been at the clockmaker's for over a year, and now she feels very strongly that it needs to come home. She calls one of her grandchildren, who solemnly promises to return the clock. Two days later, three Roma youths climb into a car and start the 1,030 kilometre trip to fulfil this promise. A strange journey along Sweden's long, winding highways begins and proves to be rich in content despite its rather trivial purpose. The youths have more questions than answers about the country they travel through for the first time. And just what is a Garbage Helicopter?

Director's Note

At first glance, the premise of 'The Garbage Helicopter' is simple: Three individuals are going to deliver an old wall clock to their grandmother. And while the film retains this simplicity throughout, the script has the ambition of telling something above and beyond the obvious. It has been written with a deep fascination for the notion of dramaturgy; I have been interested in seeing what happens if I take classic dramaturgical tools and turn down the dramatic levels to a minimum. The principle of using the fewest possible forms of expression has been given free rein, and the greatest motivation for that has been to create a kind of cinematic antithesis to much of the dramaturgy I have studied over the past 10 years.

Director's Biography

Jonas Selberg Augustsén began his career as a carpenter before making his way into the world of film via the fashion industry. Starting with the spiritual, self-reflective and playfully pretentious essay film 'Hus, torn, stenmurar & en och annan drake', his graduation project from the School of Film Directing at Gothenburg University, he has continued to tell stories in a distinctive style about people and places who exist in borderlands. In 2008, his much-discussed feature-length documentary 'Trädälskaren' premiered. His short films 'Autumn Man' (2010) and 'Bogland' (2011) are the first two films in an intended tetralogy based on the five official minority languages of Sweden. Augustsén is noted for gleaning existential questions from the most mundane situations to provoke entertaining trains of thought.

Company Profile

Established in 2000 by Jan Blomgren, **Bob Film Sweden** is an independent production company based in Stockholm that focuses primarily on feature films and television dramas. Bob Film Sweden has gained a reputation for quality and artistic edge. Its objective is to provide scriptwriters and directors with the best possible conditions in which to realise their vision, in a manner that strives to combine commercial interests with quality content.

Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Spring 2014

Natalia Garagiola

Director / Screenwriter



Santiago Gallelli

Producer



Hunting Season

'Temporada de Caza' / Argentina, Uruguay, Qatar / Spanish / 2016

Runtime: 92 min

Genre: Drama

Interests: Coming-of-age

Exhibition Format: DCP 2K

After his mother dies, a violent teenager reunites with his hunter father in the woods of southern Argentina, where he is faced with his own ability to love and to kill.



Nahuel has almost finished high school in Buenos Aires when his mother suddenly dies. Local law forces him to spend the last three months before he turns 18 with his father Ernesto, a respected hunter who lives in a small village near the mountains. The two have not seen each other in over a decade. As the journey begins and wilderness becomes his new environment, Nahuel is confronted with his ability to love and to kill.

Contact

Rei Cine

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Director's Note

For me, Southern Patagonia awakens a sense of survival. There is something ancient and dark hiding in the shade of the trees and the depths of the lakes. The stunning scenery implies menace: one is part of nature, but also submissive to it. I believe this to be the ideal context in which to develop this story; one of a teenager who is reunited with his father and wonders what kind of man he wants to become, and explores the father-son relationship within the particular world of hunting. It is through the construction of specific scenes and details that I want to look at the universality of this relationship, and the desire to be part of something greater than oneself.

Director's Biography

Born in Buenos Aires, **Natalia Garagiola** graduated from the Universidad del Cine, where she later taught. In 2004 she obtained an MA in Screenwriting from FIA-UIMP in Spain. She also took part in the Experimental Film Lab at the Universidad Di Tella in Buenos Aires. Her videos 'Track' (2007) and 'Square' (2008) were selected for Videoformes Video Art & Digital Cultures. She has written and directed three short films: 'Rincón de López' (2011), released at BAFICI; 'Mares and Parakeets' (2012), which premiered in the Cannes Critics Week, and 'Sundays', which premiered in the 2014 Cannes Director's Fortnight. 'Hunting Season' is her first feature-length film.

Company Profile

Rei Cine was created to provide a creative platform for groundbreaking filmmakers in Buenos Aires. Completed films as main producer include Benjamin Naishtat's 'History of Fear' (2014), Jazmin López's 'Leones' (2012), Adrián Villar Rojas's 'What Fire Brought to Me' (2013) and Gonzalo Tobal's 'Villegas' (2012); all of these were successfully distributed worldwide and selected for major festivals in Berlin, Cannes, Venice, Rotterdam and Locarno, among many others. In 2013, we launched Rei Distribucion, a distribution label based in Argentina. Specialising in tailor-made releases of Latin American films, we handle titles like Dominga Sotomayor's 'Thursday Till Sunday' (2012), Carlos Reygadas's 'Post Tenebras Lux' (2012), and Ana Guevara and Leticia Jorge's 'So Much Water' (2013).

Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Spring 2014

Pablo Lamar

Director / Screenwriter



Ilse Hughan, Wiebke Toppel

Producer



The Last Land

'La Ultima Tierra' / Paraguay, The Netherlands, Chile, Qatar / Spanish / 2015

Runtime: 72 min

Genre: Drama

On an isolated hilltop, Evangelina's death becomes Amancio's life.



Evangelina and Amancio, an elderly couple, live out their lives on an isolated hill. Evangelina has been ailing for a very long time. On this particular night, Amancio quietly accompanies her, with words and with whispers - with silence - through the dark hours until the break of day; the moment of her death. Now utterly alone, Amancio takes charge of the various tasks required for her burial. His actions are gradually infused with the power of ritual, as he comes to embrace solitude and loss.

Contact

Fortuna Films

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Director's Note

'The Last Land' is a film about the very core of our existence: about how we deal with death within life. A human approach to death in a time where the treatment of our lost ones is increasingly industrialised. Amancio and Evangelina have been living on the hilltop for an undetermined amount of time. It is as if they have always been there, as integral a part of the landscape as the hill itself. They could very well be the first or last inhabitants on Earth. Nevertheless, Evangelina is dead, and her death ritualises Amancio's actions. I want to portray how death transforms simple tasks, rendering them extraordinary and making the day devoted to them an utterly singular day.

Director's Biography

Pablo Lamar was born in Asunción, Paraguay, in 1984. He studied film at the Universidad del Cine of Buenos Aires (FUC). He has written and directed two short films, 'Ahendu nde sapukai' (2008) and 'Noche adentro' (2009), both of which premiered at the Cannes Critics Week.

Company Profile

Sapukai Cine is a production company based in Paraguay created to produce the film projects of Pablo Lamar, including 'I Hear Your Scream' (2008) and 'Night Inside' (2009), both of which premiered at the Semaine de la Critique at the Festival de Cannes. In 2010, Sapukai co-produced Ricardo Alves Jr.'s short film 'Permanencias', which was selected for the Semaine de la Critique. 'The Last Land' is Lamar's latest project and marks Sapukai's feature-film production debut.

Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Spring 2014

Narimane Mari

Director / Screenwriter



Corinne Castel

Producer



Madmen's Fort

'Le Fort des fous' / Algeria, France, Qatar / Amazigh, Arabic, English, French / 2016

Runtime: 150 min

Genre: Drama

Desires and greed lurk like raptors, preparing to transform a utopian dream into tragedy.



In 1860, the Algerian Sahara is coveted by the colonial powers of the time, who dream of it as a rich land full of promise. Expeditions and ambitions of conquest, however, have all been destroyed by this uncharted and mysterious terrain. Nevertheless, there are men who rise above turf wars, and who believe in the power of this mystical land to establish a society that is out of the ordinary. But greedy people circle like vultures, and are turning this utopian dream into a tragedy.

Contact

Centrale Electrique

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Director's Note

How to tangle the false with the true and bring to the fore the real power of the imagination? Like the images of nightmares or daydreams, our outdated or necessary beliefs, inaccurate memories and superstitions that continue to scare or surprise us and not forgetting History, which is no longer very clear. This story carries these phenomena: past and present without distinction, exactly as our inner self functions if everything decides to work all at once. The film's structure in five acts tolerates very well the subject's density and its potential, giving control since it is built as a series of episodes that follow one another. The work at hand is that of orchestrating it through specific formal choices.

Director's Biography

Born in Algiers, **Narimane Mari** began her career in Paris, where she co-founded two communications agencies and created cultural content for print and television media. She has contributed to developing art galleries and initiated a collection of photography books. In 2001, she produced her first film, 'L'Arpenteur', which won the Jean Vigo Award. In 2010, she founded Allers Retours Films in Algeria in order to produce engaged documentaries and auteur films. Her filmography as a director includes 'Prologue' (2007), a medium-length film about the artist Michel Haas, and 'Loubia Hamra' (2013), her first feature-length film, which won three prizes at FID and CPH:DOX in 2013 and many distinctions at nearly 40 international festivals. In February, 2015, she introduced 'La Vie courante', a work-in-progress of collective choreography, at Hors Pistes at the Pompidou Centre.

Company Profile

Allers Retours Films is engaged in producing creative cinema in both fiction and documentary modes. It supports the work of directors as well as fine artistic creations.

Centrale Electrique is an independent production company that has produced numerous committed documentary and narrative films. The company seeks socially relevant stories that reflect their authors' take on history and contemporary society.

Post-production Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2014

Jonas Carpignano

Director / Screenwriter



Jon Coplon

Producer



Mediterranea

Italy, France, Germany, Qatar / Italian / 2015

Runtime: 135 min

Genre: Drama

After leaving his native Burkina Faso, Ayiva makes the perilous journey across the Sahara and Mediterranean in search of a better life in Italy.



Ayiva and Abas are best friends making the trip from Burkina Faso to Europe in search of a better future and to provide for their families back home. They survive the arduous journey through the Sahara and across the Mediterranean Sea. But when they arrive, tensions build between the locals and the immigrant community, and Ayiva must consider what this “better life” is really worth.

Contact

Film Factory

Jonas Carpignano

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Director's Note

I've lived in Calabria over the past four years, where I met the characters of 'Mediterranea', whose experiences I adapted to make the film. My guiding principle was to tell their stories in an authentic and honest way, and to capture the special atmosphere of this world. Without their generous support and active participation, 'Mediterranea' could never exist.

Director's Biography

Jonas Carpignano has spent his life between Italy and the USA and currently lives in Gioia Tauro, where he has been making films for the past five years. His work has been shown at prestigious film festivals around the world including Cannes, Venice, SXSW and the New York Film Festival. His short film 'A Chjàna' won the Controcampo Award for Best Short Film in Venice, and was awarded a Nastro D'Argento Special Mention from the Association of Italian Film Critics. His latest short, 'A Ciambra', won the Sony Discovery Prize at the Critics' Week at Cannes. Carpignano is an alumnus of the 2012 Sundance Writers & Directors Lab, and a recipient of the Mahindra/Sundance GFA Award. He is currently finishing post-production on his first feature film, 'Mediterranea'.

Company Profile

DCM stands for the initials of the three founders, Dario Suter, Christoph Daniel and Marc Schmidheiny. The Swiss trio set up their film production company in Berlin in 2008. When in 2010 Joel Brandeis joined the partners, DCM became a Swiss quartet. Following the production of its first feature film, 'Waffenstillstand' (2009), it wasn't long before DCM turned its attention to the international market and got involved in the distribution business. In 2011, DCM acquired the Berlin-based film distribution company, Delphi Filmverleih, together with its existing team. With firm partnerships in both the UK and the USA, DCM has built a solid network it can access and is currently developing a slate of local and international projects.

Post-production Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2014

Deniz Gamze Ergüven

Director / Screenwriter



Alice Winocour

Screenwriter



Charles Gillibert

Producer



Contact

CG Cinema

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Mustang

Turkey, France, Germany, Qatar / Turkish / 2015

Runtime: 100 min

Genre: Drama

Interests: Women's Interest

Exhibition Format: DCP 2K

Five vibrant girls grow out of childhood in a family obsessed with their virtue. Their trial of strength for freedom crests into a spectacular attempt to break free.



A village by the Black Sea, far from Istanbul. When they play a game in which they sit on boys' shoulders, five girls from the same family trigger a little scandal with unpredictable consequences. As this episode rushes them out of childhood, their home becomes a wife plant with security isolation. Every outburst of their femininity is answered by the erection of higher walls. The girls are beaten and bonded into marriage. Lale, the youngest, refuses anything that threatens her liberty. Her drive for freedom culminates in a trial of strength with her increasingly conservative family. It turns out that this obsession with virtue has another side; once they discover this, the remaining girls make an epic attempt to break free.

Director's Note

This film grew from my desire to tell of what it means to be a girl in Turkey today. I remember my emotions when, the first time I attended a relative's funeral, a man none of us knew chased away all the women who were gathered around the coffin, because they, as "impure" women, "defiled the body". Later, at another funeral, I surprised myself by deliberately moving away from the coffin because I was "defiling the body". For a moment, I hugged the walls, lowered my head. That horrible idea that I could be "unclean", simply because I was a woman, had taken root. Lale, the main character of 'Mustang', embodies that part of us that stands tall and always keeps her head up.

Director's Biography

Deniz Gamze Ergüven was born in Ankara and lives in Istanbul. She studied Filmmaking at La Fémis in Paris, and Literature and African History in Johannesburg. Her graduation film, 'Bir Damla Su', was selected for numerous festivals, including the Festival de Cannes Cinéfondation, and won an award at Locarno. She has developed two feature films: 'Mustang', co-written with Alice Winocour, and 'Kings', winner of Emergence in 2011, which participated in the Cinéfondation Workshop in 2011 and the Sundance Screenwriter's Lab in 2012.

Company Profile

Founded by Charles Gillibert in 2013, **CG Cinema** is a film production company focused on international projects. In its first year, CG Cinema began production on Olivier Assayas's 'Sils Maria', Mia Hansen-Løve's 'Eden', and Laure de Clermont-Tonnerre's 'Rabbit'. Between 2006 and 2012, while at MK2, Charles Gillibert produced, co-produced, and supervised the distribution and sales of more than 20 films. In 2010, he was a member of the board of MK2 SA.

Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2014

Walid Mattar

Director / Screenwriter



Saïd Hamich

Producer



Northern Wind

'Al-Gharbi' / Tunisia, France, Qatar / Arabic, French / 2016

Runtime: 100 min

Genre: Drama

Genre: Identity, Immigration, Social Issues

Exhibition Format: DCP 2K

A shoe factory is relocated from France to Tunisia. The fates of Marcel, who becomes unemployed at 50, and Foued, a young Tunisian womaniser, are turned upside down.



Marcel, a worker in a French shoe factory, lives a simple life between family, fishing and the local betting bar. When the factory unexpectedly relocates to Tunisia. Marcel finds himself unemployed and in search of a new future. Meanwhile, in Tunis, Foued starts working at the shoe factory to help out his ailing mother and woo the girl he fancies. The two men's paths cross when it is least expected.

Contact

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Director's Note

I have come to realise that people gather by class rather than by geographical origin. One ambition of this film is to demonstrate the proximity of Tunisia and France, two worlds deemed to be so different. Through a story surrounding a factory's relocation, we discover the texture of two societies that in fact closely coincide, sharing the same shattered hopes of two men who find they are a freely traded commodity. We often witness only narrow pictures of relocation, absent genuine fragments of life. 'Northern Wind' widens the view, testifying to the daily lives of people and rendering the pulse of those lives by remaining close to the uniqueness of each character, hopefully accounting for our times in a more humane way.

Director's Biography

Walid Mattar was born in Tunisia. He directed his first film, 'Le Cuirassée Abdelkarim', in 2003. In 2006, he co-directed (with Leyla Bouzid) the short film 'Sbeh El Khir' as part of '10 Courts, 10 Regards', a project created by young Tunisian directors that was presented at the Festival de Cannes. In 2010, he directed 'Condemnations...', which was presented at more than 30 international film festivals and won prizes in Tangier and Montpellier. 'Zanta Clauz', his latest short film, was selected for more than 30 festivals and has won six prizes, including the Best Director Prize of the Tunisian Film Directors Festival.

Company Profile

Barney Production is an independent company created in 2010 by Saïd Hamich. With the ambition of developing auteur cinema, Barney coproduced its first short film, Walid Mattar's 'Tendid'. Short-film productions include Leila Bouzid's 'Zakaria', Mattar's 'Zanta Clauz', Xavien Sirven's 'Wolf, Are You There?', Hadrien Bichet's 'Don't Speak About Love', Steve Achiepo's 'Where It Sprang From' and Kamal Lazraq's 'The Man with the Dog'. Barney also coproduced the feature films 'Hope' by Boris Lojkine and 'Périmées' by Nabil Ayouch. The company's current slate includes short films by Sirven, Giroux, Vincent Tricon and El Mehdi Azzam, and development of features by Mattar, Sirven, Julia Cordonnier and Aurélie Cardin, Ismael El Iraki and Walid Mattar. In 2012, the company received the Jean-Luc Lagardère Foundation Grant for Film Producers.

Development Grant

Feature Narrative

Spring 2014

Hend Fakhroo

Director



Caroline Palla

Screenwriter



Parijat

Qatar / Arabic, English

Genre: Drama

A Qatari woman from a dissected family has moved and settled in London. When she is unexpectedly appointed head of her family's struggling perfume business, she rises to the challenge of saving the company and mending her broken past.



'Parijat' is an enthralling drama that explores a Qatari woman's efforts to save her family's third-generation perfume business. Newlywed Sahira's life in London is suddenly disrupted when her grandfather dies. Upon returning to Qatar for his funeral, she is faced with the responsibility of taking over the lead of the ailing company from her erratic father and restore her grandfather's legacy. Driven by the fear of being outrun by her fiercest competitor, the Al-Gaoud family, Sahira enters a dangerous alliance. Coinciding with the birth of her first son, she launches Parijat, a scent that temporarily re-establishes her company's leading position in the Arabian Gulf. Determined to defeat the powers that are set to undermine her, she unleashes a ruthless perfumer war.

Contact

Certifiable Productions

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Director's Note

Women in film lack strong storylines in general, let alone films that tell stories about Arab women. 'Parijat' is the story of a modern Arab woman who struggles with the effect globalisation has had on her upbringing. When she is suddenly faced with tragedy and obligation, she tries to find middle ground while remaining true to herself. Her bittersweet journey is a beautiful story to bring to the big screen, perhaps even bridging a divide between Western audiences and Arab films.

Director's Biography

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

Screenwriter's Biography

Caroline Palla is a visual artist and screenwriter from Zurich. She graduated from Zurich University of the Arts with an extensive photographic series showing the contents of common people's medicine cabinets, titled 'Going Inside'. In her succeeding projects called '127 - Imagine a golden piggy bank with no one to spare a dime' and 'The Yen-Yen: Thirtysix Drum Sets', Palla further developed her object-centred photography and she has since expanded her artistic practice to include screenwriting. In 2014, she spent two months in Bahrain, where she was introduced to filmmaker Hend Fakhroo. She and Fakhroo are currently developing 'Parijat' into a feature-length screenplay.

Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Spring 2014

Jan Xavier Pacle

Director / Screenwriter



Sky Gonzales

Producer



Remembering Ada

Qatar, The Philippines / English, Filipino

Runtime: 110 min

Genre: Drama

Exhibition Format: DCP

Caught between past and present, lives cross as an aspiring writer chooses between reconnecting an old star-crossed couple and saving his own marriage.



The Philippines, 2050. Franz, a young executive and aspiring writer, finds a sketchbook at a coffee shop: page after page of drawings of a charming woman along with notes written in an unknown language. Franz's interest in finding out the story behind his find – and hopefully making it his own – leads him to Ethan, the owner of the book.

Qatar, 2007. Ethan attends his brother's wedding, where he meets Ada, the woman who will change the course of his life. They fall in love and venture on a winter romance. Being young and carefree, the couple forgets one major fact: they are not in their home country. Ultimately, they trigger a chain of events that separates them.

Now, several decades later, it is up to Franz to reunite them.

Contact

RenderFarm Graphics

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Director's Note

Gone are the days of the golden age of Filipino cinema. The only films being pushed today are the certified money-makers – yet most of the quality films are in the independent cinema. While these independent productions often gain international recognition, they seldom have proper exposure at home. My goal is simple: To create a film that might bridge the gap between independent and mainstream cinema. My ambition is to make a film that will embody the art and culture of my home country, Qatar, as well as my native country, the Philippines. I seek to inspire Qatar's filmmakers to make more films, and to change how mainstream and independent cinema are perceived in the Philippines. I believe 'Remembering Ada' can help me reach this goal.

Director's Biography

Jan Xavier Pacle graduated from Saint Louis University, Baguio City, in the Philippines, where he completed his Bachelor of Arts in Communications. An up-and-coming director, Pacle has directed and produced films that have received international recognition at the Cannes Film Festival, the National Film Festival for Talented Youth in Seattle, the Doha Tribeca Film Festival and the San Francisco Global Movie Fest. He has directed three shorts and one feature film, all made in Qatar, which he considers his second home.

Company Profile

Mediadante, an award-winning independent production company based in the Middle East, is a collective of filmmakers who aim to become the storytellers of the Middle East for the world. Completed projects include the CINE Golden Eagle award-winning 12-part television series 'On the Top' (2013), 'Secrets of an Arab City' (2014), Coca Cola's Qatar-focused Brazil World Cup advertising campaign (2014) and the Qatar Football Association advertising campaign (2014). Mediadante is currently in production on two feature-length documentaries, 'Mecca United' and 'The Workers Cup'; and Jan Pacle's fiction feature 'Remembering Ada'.

RenderFarm is an independent production house based in Baguio City, the Philippines. Its aim is to make films that will have an impact on the Filipino film industry that will ripple across the globe. Previous films that received international attention include Jan Pacle's 'Finding Faith' (2011), 'Angel in June' (2012) and 'After Seven' (2014).

Development Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2014

Shahad Ameen

Director / Screenwriter



Mohammed Sendi

Producer



Scales

'Harashef' / Saudi Arabia, Qatar / Arabic

Runtime: 72 min

Genre: Drama, Fantasy

Thirteen-year-old Hayat was almost sacrificed to become a mermaid by her father when she was an infant. Now she faces the same problem once again because of her newborn brother.



The only source of the food on the island is mermaid flesh. The only way to keep the food supply going is to sacrifice baby girls to the sea. After being saved by her father as an infant from being given to the mermaids, 13-year-old Hayat faces the prospect of being sacrificed again, because island customs dictate that the presence of her newborn brother makes her obsolete. Hayat must choose between accepting her fate to become a mermaid or fighting for the body she inhabits.

Contact

7th Dream Films

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Director's Note

In my work I look for ways to inject reality into fantasy, not the other way around. I see a blurry line between fantasy and reality. There are fantastic phenomena in our world, but we refuse to see them. When people think of mermaids, the first thing that comes to mind is their lovely physiques and angelic voices. They are unattainable objects of male desire. I wrote this story because I believe Arab women are the opposite of my interpretation of mermaids. I am making this film because I want women to believe they own their bodies and voices – and there isn't a heroine to save them except themselves. As the protagonist, Hayat thinks she has been robbed of making her own choices, but she comes to believe that she is in control of her own destiny, and that she can choose to become a victim or a legend.

Director's Biography

Shahad Ameen was born and raised in Jeddah. She obtained a Bachelor's degree in Video Production and Film Studies from the University of West London, and also holds a degree in Screenwriting. Her films include 'Our Own Musical' and 'Leila's Window' (2011), which showed at the Gulf Film Festival and was named Best Film at the Saudi Film Festival, and 'Eye & Mermaid' (2013), which premiered at the Dubai International Film Festival and was screened at the Toronto International Film Festival and the Stockholm Film Festival, and was awarded Best Arab Short in the Emirates Film Competition and Best Cinematography at the Abu Dhabi International Film Festival in 2014.

Company Profile

Since 2011, award-winning production company **7th Dream Films** has been producing films that tell our stories. We are a group of passionate Saudi filmmakers who thrive on making a difference; global citizens who love to share our stories; individuals intrigued by freedom, justice and equality; artists who want to contribute to the development of media and cinema in the Middle East; and, finally, entrepreneurs who dream of a Saudi cinema industry.

Post-production Grant

Feature Narrative

Spring 2014

Kaan Müjdecı

Director / Screenwriter / Producer



Yasin Müjdecı

Producer



Sivas

Turkey, Germany, Qatar / Turkish / 2014

Runtime: 90 min

Genre: Drama

Exhibition Format: DCP 2K

A story of ascendant manhood and the feeling of power through the eyes of a fighter dog and an 11-year-old boy.



Set in a bleak Anatolian village, 'Sivas' tells the story of 11-year-old Aslan and Sivas, a weathered fighting dog, who develop a strong relationship after the boy finds Sivas wounded and left to die. A school play of 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs' dominates the background, as Aslan is disappointed in losing the role of the prince to Osman, his rival in love. While Osman gets ahead in the race to win the hand of Ayşe, the village 'princess', Aslan tries to impress her with his new-found friend. Sivas, meanwhile, having found a new lease on life, wins one fight after another, strengthening Aslan's hand against Osman. However, as Sivas's success at the fighting ground attracts attention, roles change and Aslan finds himself in an unexpected crash course in adulthood - and leaving his princess behind.

Contact

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Director's Note

'Sivas' tells a tale of the skewed relationship of human beings to each other, to animals and to nature itself. Set in a village in Middle Anatolia, 'Sivas' narrates a story of power that interferes in love and friendship. I remember very well how I felt when I first saw men watching a dogfight: ascendant manhood and feelings of power, anger and anxiety, all at the same time. 'Sivas' is about winning and losing by observing fate and the helplessness of individuals to fight it.

Director's Biography

Born in Ankara, **Kaan Müjdecı** moved to Berlin in 2003 in order to study film directing. Instead, he opened an illegal open-air cinema, then a bar, then a fashion store. In parallel, Müjdecı continued making films. Among his short films, 'Day of German Unity' (2010) was bought by several TV channels; 'Jerry', his thesis film at the New York Film Academy, was screened at the Berlinale's Talent Campus, which he attended in 2011. 'Fathers and Sons', a documentary about dog fights in central Anatolia, served as a platform for writing and directing 'Sivas', his first feature film. A versatile entrepreneur, Müjdecı is also at the helm of the popular Kreuzberg venue Luzia and the concept fashion store Voo.

Company Profile

Kaan Film was founded in Ankara by Kaan Müjdecı in 2011. Projects include Müjdecı's documentary 'Fathers and Sons' (2011) and his first feature, 'Sivas' (2014), which was selected for the Official Selection of the Venice Film Festival and won the special jury prize. Kaan Film will continue to produce Müjdecı's film projects under the name Coloured Giraffes.

Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2014

Anahita Ghazvinizadeh

Director / Screenwriter



Zoe Sua Cho

Producer



Contact

Mass Ornament Films

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They

Iran, USA, Qatar / English, Farsi

Runtime: 100 min

Genre: Coming-of-age, Drama

Genre: Coming-of-age, Social Issues

Suspended between childhood and adulthood, J imagines possible futures through familial relationships. Plants, poetry and medicines provide the environment where these relations take place.



J is in their early teens and lives in the countryside. J has been diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder, goes by the selected pronoun “they”, and takes hormone blockers to suspend puberty. While J’s parents are away, their older sister and her Iranian boyfriend are assigned the duties of house-sitting and looking after J. The three spend time in their parents’ greenhouses, those artificial environments for sheltering organic growth, as well as in the clinic, that technologised institution that shapes their bodies. They recast the family and the medical-industrial complexes through role-play games and test the role of language by reading poetry, telling stories, and playing bilingual games. These adventures become an entry point into the open-ended questions of growth and becoming THEY are facing.

Director’s Note

A child will become an adult. I realised once that this simple phrase is the core of my work. Rather than defining the states of childhood and adulthood, I reflect on the transition; the verb “to become” is the stimulus for my work. The transitional child or the becoming adult – with their strong intuition, amorphous sensibility and unconscious perceptions – is the character at the centre of fiction; indeed, they themselves are the fiction. I try to picture the moments that bring out the urge for self-determination: those situations that function as a delay in which the child grows out rather than up, to drive thinking about the possibilities of becoming for a child, and ponder the philosophical and ethical questions of what constitutes a person and what determines personhood.

Director’s Biography

Anahita Ghazvinizadeh was born in Tehran. She obtained her BFA from the Tehran University of Art in 2011 and attended Abbas Kiarostami’s Filmmaking Workshop from 2007-2011. Her MFA came from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2013. Her honours received include a Cinéfondation First Prize from the Festival de Cannes in 2013, a Silver Hugo from the Chicago International Film Festival, and Best Short Film, Best Directing and Best Short Screenplay Awards from the Festival of the Iranian Cinema. She was named one of ‘Filmmaker’ magazine’s 25 New Faces of Independent Cinema, and was a writing fellow at the Sundance Screenwriters’ Lab. Childhood, parenthood, family drama, and exploring notions of growth and gender identity are the main themes of her work.

Company Profile

Mass Ornament is a transnational film collaborative based in Chicago. It was born out of the collaboration of Zoe Sua Cho, Anahita Ghazvinizadeh and Yoni Goldstein. The company develops and produces art house cinema, documentaries, and moving image works by new filmmakers.

Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2014

Bassam Chekhes

Director / Screenwriter / Producer



To All Naked Men

'Ela Jamie Al-Rejal Al-Uraat' / Syria, The Netherlands, Turkey, Lebanon, Qatar / Arabic / 2016

Runtime: 90 min

Genre: Drama

Genre: Identity, Social Issues, War

Exhibition Format: DCP 2K

One night, Salman wakes up frightened. He is driven to escape the investigation that was taking place in his dream, as he realises that he knew something about the crime.



The war in Syria is drawing to an end, and the first reliable election stands on the ruins of the whole country. One night, Salman wakes up frightened. He must escape the investigation that was taking place in his dream, realising that he knows more about the crime that took place in it. The hidden body is that of Salma, his missing sister. Surprisingly, she now has a 10-year old son, Wael, who searches for Salman, determined to find him. Salman ran away from Syria and he lives now alone in Beirut. He works as a seller, but his real-life journeys are never as threatening as the ones in his dreams, as they begin to reveal the circumstances of his sister's disappearance.

Contact

Bassam Chekhes Production

Bassam Chekhes

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Director's Note

I feel we live in a time when our relations and beliefs are being harshly judged, easily categorised and pushed towards extremism; in order to protect our individuality, we might become less tolerant, and more isolated, secretive and fearful. Twelve years ago, the "Are you with us or against us?" rallying cry was sounded to drag governments into the war on Iraq. But today, this motto has made its way into our society's institutions, and even into our families – but "to whom do we refer when we talk about us?" Today, the war in Syria, as well as other conflicts in the region, is cultivating sectarian violence and ideological killing, but when both killer and victim come from the same family, how can we survive?

Director's Biography

Bassam Chekhes was born in Syria and moved to the Netherlands, where he studied Audio-Visual Art and graduated from Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam. He has shot, directed and produced a dozen short films and collaborated on several projects with other artists and filmmakers. His latest short film, 'Waiting for P.O. Box', screened in competition at the Festival de Cannes in 2012. Aside from his involvement in numerous individual projects by different filmmakers from the Arab region, Chekhes has worked as a tutor and creative advisor for regional institutions including the Beirut Screen Institute, The Royal Film Commission – Jordan and the Doha Film Institute.

Company Profile

Bassam Chekhes Production is an independent production company founded by Bassam Chekhes with the aim of collaborating in making films and art projects that are personal, distinctive and innovative. With his new feature film 'To All Naked Men', he continues his participation in strengthening links between projects coming from the Arab region and potential international platforms.

Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Spring 2014

Gitanjali Rao

Director / Screenwriter



Serge Lalou, Clara Mahieu

Producer



True Love Story

India, France, Qatar / Hindi / 2017

Runtime: 75 min

Genre: Animation

Exhibition Format: DCP

Set in the streets of Bombay, 'True Love Story' is an animated film about what happens when the ultimate fantasy is applied in reality.



Bollywood is a cult in India. What is it that makes millions of people believe in it so strongly, follow it with such a passion and celebrate it with such fervour, when for most Indians, life is a struggle from one day to the next? This film is an attempt at demystifying what Bollywood means for young people in love on the streets of Bombay.

Contact

Les Films d'ici

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Director's Note

On my daily travels through the streets of Bombay, I have always been intrigued by the lives of those thousands of boys and girls who migrate to the metropolis from small towns in the hopes of a better future, but wind up living on the streets. Some of them are amazing success stories – Bollywood stars or underworld dons. But not all. Those who live the simple oppressed life on the streets, constructing buildings, cleaning sewers etc. – essentially making the city run – are completely forgotten. Their stories have never been interesting enough to be told. Therefore, this is my attempt to tell the story of these spirited, hopeful young people – the neglected heart of Bombay.

Director's Biography

Gitanjali Rao obtained her BFA with honours from the Sir J. J. Institute of Applied Art in Mumbai. A director, producer, animator and theatre artist, she has independently produced and directed three award-winning short films: 'Orange' (2006); 'Printed Rainbow' (2008); and 'TrueLoveStory', which had its premiere at the Cannes Critics' Week. Rao recently received funding from the Doha Film Institute in support of the upcoming feature-length version of 'TrueLoveStory'.

Company Profile

Since 1984, **Les Films d'Ici** has been producing feature-length documentaries, feature films, one-hour documentaries and film collections. The company's catalogue includes more than 700 films that have been released in theatres, shown in festivals and broadcast on television worldwide.

Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Spring 2014

Babak Anvari

Director / Screenwriter



Lucan Toh, Emily Leo,

Oliver Roskill

Producer



Under the Shadow

Iran, UK, UAE, Qatar / Farsi / 2016

Runtime: 95 min

Genre: Drama, Thriller

Interests: Psychological, War, Women's Interest

Exhibition Format: DCP

As a mother and daughter struggle to cope with the terrors of the post-revolution, war-torn Tehran of the 1980s, a mysterious evil begins to haunt their home.



Tehran, 1988. Shideh lives amid the chaos of the Iran-Iraq war. Accused of subversion and blacklisted from medical college, she is in a state of malaise. Furthermore, her husband is at war, leaving her alone to protect their young daughter, Dorsa. Shortly after a missile hits their apartment building but fails to explode, Dorsa falls ill and her behaviour becomes increasingly disturbed. Searching for answers, Shideh learns from a superstitious neighbour that the cursed, unexploded missile might have brought in djinns – malevolent spirits that travel on the wind. Convinced that a supernatural force within the building is attempting to possess Dorsa, Shideh finds she has no choice but to confront it if she is to save her daughter.

Contact

Wigwam Films

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Director's Note

I used to hear many horrifying stories from other kids about djinn. They were the embodiment of the most frightening things one can imagine. I was born and raised in Tehran in the early years of the revolution and during the Iran-Iraq war – the first five years of my life were spent in wartime. The months when my father, a doctor, was required to be absent were terrifying for my mother. Nowadays she believes she unconsciously passed on her fears to my brother and me during that time. 'Under the Shadow' can be viewed as a tense horror film, but its story is also an allegory, portraying the perverse effect of war and political turmoil on individuals and on society as a whole – and the dominating power of fear.

Director's Biography

Babak Anvari is an award-winning Iranian-born filmmaker based in London. Since the age of 16, he has been involved in the production of numerous short films and video art pieces that have been screened at venues and in festivals around the world. At the Cristal Festival Europe's Young Directors Forum in 2012, Anvari was selected from 517 entries as one of the eight rising stars in the world of film and media. His short film 'Two & Two' was nominated for a BAFTA in 2012 after screening at major international film festivals.

Company Profile

Wigwam Films consists of a group of entrepreneurial producers with a mission to produce outstanding content for cinema and television. Our backgrounds are strong in creative development, financing and production. We seek the best talent of our generation and are inspired by championing their voices and nurturing their ability. We hope to collaborate on films that have an impact and connect with audiences who love cinema. Our most recent feature, Shawn Christensen's 'Before I Disappear', starring Christensen, Paul Wesley, Emmy Rossum and Ron Perlman, won the prestigious Audience Award at this year's SXSW Film Festival.

Production Grant

Feature Narrative

Fall 2014

Deepak Rauniyar

Director / Screenwriter



Tsering Rhitar Sherpa

Producer



White Sun

'Seto Surya' / Nepal, Qatar / Nepali / 2016

Runtime: 100 min

Genre: Comedy, Drama

Interests: Politics, War, Women's Interest, Youth

Exhibition Format: DCP 2K

A dark comedy about life in a Nepali mountain village in the wake of the decade-long armed conflict.



Young Pooja lives with her mother and her beloved grandfather. Her father, Agni joined the Maoist guerrillas and left their village to fight against the regime years ago. The death of Pooja's grandfather brings Agni back to the village for the burial rites. Thrilled at the prospect of seeing her father, whom she has never met, Pooja looks on with dismay as he struggles to cope with her mother's independence, and fights with her family's closest friend. Agni alienates everyone around him, and cannot find enough men to carry his father's body to the river for the cremation. As Agni looks for help among police, rebel guerrillas and neighbouring villagers, a portrait of post-conflict Nepal emerges.

Contact

Aadi Production

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Director's Note

'White Sun' is a story about the weight of the past on Nepali present, and a reflection of my own experiences in past years during a decade-long war and the ongoing peace process. These characters I have seen. I have met them. I have lived with them. In the bitter, war-torn present, 'White Sun' looks for signs of life and new beginnings. We have taken the form of a comedy – though a dark one – to represent both the struggle and the hope of the Nepali people as they begin to find their way out of this place. I believe in the power of film as an art form to help people understand one another's predicaments, and our shared experiences of life and death. My goal with 'White Sun' is to create a film that communicates the realities of contemporary Nepali life to the world, and which cultivates those better elements of the human spirit that speak to everyone.

Director's Biography

Deepak Rauniyar is a Berlinale Talent Campus and TIFF Talent Lab alumnus. His feature-length debut, 'Highway' (2012) had its premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival, and was the first film from Nepal to screen at a major international festival. Currently in progress, 'White Sun', his second feature, has been selected for L'Atelier at the Festival de Cannes and Boost! in Rotterdam, and awarded funding from the Hubert Bals Fund.

Company Profile

Co-founded by writer-director Deepak Rauniyar and actor-casting director Asha Magrati, **Aadi Production** is a team of experienced and dedicated film and video professionals based in Kathmandu. Aadi's first short film was 'Threshold'; it screened internationally, winning awards at the Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival in 2008 and the Ahmedabad International Film Festival in 2009. Aadi's debut feature 'Highway' (2012), which premiered at the Berlinale, was the first Nepali film ever to screen at a major international film festival. The company is currently developing its second feature, 'White Sun', which it hopes to launch in 2016.

Feature Documentary

City of Jade
Dream Away
From My Syrian Room
Limbo
Madagascar 1947, The Sound of Silence
The Man Behind the Microphone
The Other Side of Everything
Roshmia
The Silk Railroad
Speed Sisters
Stronger than a Bullet
Tondo, Beloved
We Have Never Been Kids
Zaineb Hates the Snow

Post-production Grant

Feature Documentary

Fall 2014

Midi Z

Director / Screenwriter



Isabella Ho, Wang Hsing-hung

Producer



City of Jade

'Feicuizhicheng' / Myanmar, Taiwan, Qatar / Mandarin, Burmese / 2015

Runtime: 120 min

Genre: Creative Documentary

Can they escape the army's interrogation and the temptation of drugs? Sleeping, eating and mining in the City of Jade.



When the war between the Myanmar army and the KIA broke out, the corporations fled the mines. Hundreds of thousands of workers flocked in, seizing the chance to make a fortune. Recently, my eldest brother was released from prison. He has recruited a group of workers, ready to make a comeback in the jade mines. Day and night, they live in a cycle of digging, eating and sleeping. The only thing on their minds is to find a jade stone that fetches a good price. My brother wants to make a fresh start, but the friends with whom he used to take drugs are back. Will the "city of jade" make these men rich overnight, or drag them back to the dark world of narcotics?

Contact

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Director's Note

In making 'City of Jade', I want to witness the general value of survival in the history of human evolution. I know the result will never be different. There are always middle classes above the workers; they gain their money from the corporations and super-rich who then make their fortune from the workers. All of them depend on each other to survive; their fates are completely entwined. This is one of the "truths" of how human beings survive. What I am trying to do with this documentary is not to find out "exactly what happened, or is happening", but the truth that truly exists in the world in which we live.

Director's Biography

Born in Myanmar, **Midi Z** trained as an artist in Taiwan. His graduation film, 'Paloma Blanca', was acclaimed worldwide. His short film 'Hua-xin Incident' was produced by Hou Hsiao-hsien and Ang Lee. In 2011, Midi made his first feature, 'Return to Burma', which was in competition in the Rotterdam and Busan film festivals. His latest feature, 'Ice Poison', premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2014, was named Best Film in Edinburgh and represented Taiwan in the Academy Awards. He has also won several prizes for his screenplays. 'City of Jade' is his first documentary.

Company Profile

Headed by director Midi Z, **Seashore Image Productions** was founded in 2011 after Midi Z and his team produced a number of successful commercials and critically acclaimed short films. In this short time, the company has produced three feature-length fiction films, two documentaries, 23 commercials and four micro-films. Seashore's films have appeared in more than 100 international film festivals in 45 countries, and have won numerous awards. 'Ice Poison', Midi Z's latest feature, had its premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival, was named Best Film at the Edinburgh International Film Festival and was Taiwan's entry in the Academy Awards for Best Foreign Language Film. The company is currently in production with 'City of Jade'.

Development Grant
Feature Documentary
Spring 2014

Marouan Omara, Johanna Domke
Director / Screenwriter



Roman Roitman
Producer



Dream Away

'Al-Holm Al-Ba'eed' / Egypt, Germany, Qatar / Arabic, English, French, German, Italian, Russian / 2016

Runtime: 85 min

Genre: Creative Documentary

Interests: Identity, Immigration, Politics, Social Issues, Women's Interest, Youth

Exhibition Format: DCP

Young Egyptians are lured to Sharm El-Sheikh as migrant workers in their own country. 'Dream Away' is a journey deep into the imagination of a generation that dreams to survive.



On the sun-soaked coastal strip that is one of the Middle East's most popular holiday destinations, the glitziest of hotels can shroud the grubbiest of secrets. Sharm El-Sheikh is the paradisiacal destination of Egyptians and international tourists, all of whom flock to the resort city looking for real-life fantasy. The tourists are in search of beaches and nightlife, while the notably young Egyptians desperately seek work, or are attracted by the foreign cultures that inhabit the place. This generation of Egyptians stands in stark contrast with Western cultural norms – some read it as the independence they have dreamt of, while others find it offends their moral standards. 'Dream Away' follows a tourist group over the course of a day, taking the viewer to different sites in Sharm El-Sheikh to examine the subjects of the film.

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Director's Note

Set in Sharm El-Sheikh, the celebrated tourist hub on the Red Sea, 'Dream Away' deals with topics everybody can relate to: the clash of cultures, the tourism industry, and the exploitation of an unequal economic situation. But the context is unique: Islamic culture meets the entertainment industry of the West and the post-revolutionary socio-political situation of Egypt. The film focuses on a generation of young Egyptians seeking jobs in the tourist industry; this leads them to struggle with their worldview but does not hold them back from dreaming. We feel it is an important moment in time for Egypt to recognise the struggle of youth in the country, as it is they who will shape the future of the nation. It is important both to understand their difficulties as well as to express their ideological concerns and demands for liberty.

Director's Biography

Marouan Omara is a documentary filmmaker from Egypt. He studied Applied Arts at Helwan University, and filmmaking at the Academy of Cinema, Arts and Technology in Egypt. His works seek to express a dreamlike notion by exploring the overlap of fiction and reality. He currently teaches film and video at the German University in Cairo and is an adjunct professor in film production at the American University in Cairo.

Johanna Domke is a visual artist and filmmaker from Germany. She studied Fine Arts at the Royal Danish Art Academy and the Malmö Art Academy, and attended the Postgraduate Programme in Film at the Media Art Academy in Cologne. She produces work that lies in the space where art and cinema meet, with a combined structural and socio-political approach. Her work has received considerable attention at exhibitions and film festivals around the world.

Company Profile

Filmbucht was founded by Roman Roitman, Max Wiemann and David Kilagöz in 2012. It is a young film production company from Cologne aimed at producing demanding documentaries, films and television projects. Filmbucht focuses on international co-productions and first-time German directors working in fiction and documentary.

Post-production Grant
Feature Documentary
Spring 2014

Hazem Alhamwi
Director / Screenwriter



Nathalie Combe
Producer

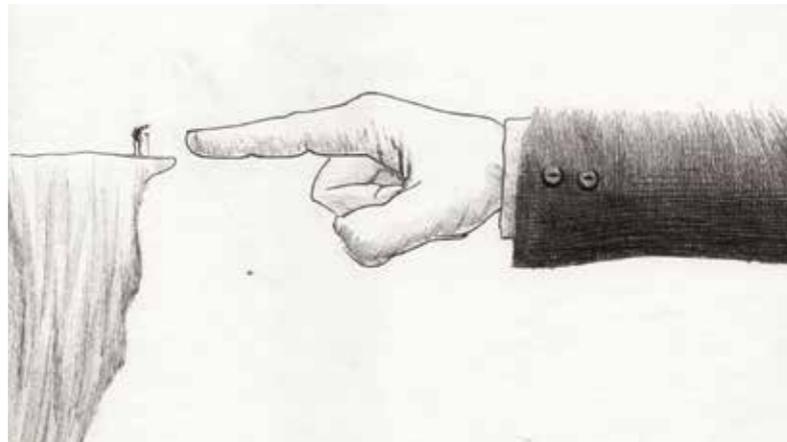


From My Syrian Room

'Qaafila fi Ghurfa' / Syria, Lebanon, France, Germany, Qatar / Arabic / 2014

Runtime: 70 min
Genre: Creative Documentary, Drama
Interests: Psychological, War
Exhibition Format: HDCAM

A Syrian painter, who found in drawing a way to stay alive under the Assad's tyranny, goes to a personal trip through the last 30 years in Syria.



How can one operate as a free, creative person when one has been channelled to remain a good citizen in the Assad regime? How can Syrians free themselves of the fear so deeply rooted in them from birth? Sharing his memories with his friends and with participants of the protests of 2011, Syrian painter and filmmaker Hazem Alhamwi tries to understand how Syrians have learned to live with distress and anxiety. Talking with his compatriots, Alhamwi tries to understand his people's destiny. Through their personal memories, they expose the will to freedom of a whole country.

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Director's Note

In 2011, my people in Syria woke up asking for freedom, and they were ready to die for it. Much violence took place and is still going on. I have a strong and deep feeling that I will die in the course of these events. I told only two people about this: my girlfriend Lamia and my close friend Ghassan, and I decided, as a final trace of my life, to do what I've always loved to do. I started drawing and filming. I learned more why my people are in the streets, why this revolution happened. I found out about the moment when a person accepts to die in order to protect their living soul. The film tells stories from Syria, both personal and relevant to our society, both past and present, to explain why this revolution occurred, and how the soul can shift from wishing to die to desiring life.

Director's Biography

Hazem Alhamwi was born and educated in Syria, under the Assad dynasty. Unable to adapt to the values of the Syrian regime, he found freedom in drawing at an early stage. For many years, he spent his days drawing caricatures, lonely in his dark room, admiring those few who dared stand up against the dictatorship, and regretting that ordinary Syrian men and women could not find the strength to struggle for their freedom. But in 2011, the revolution started and Alhamwi had to renew his vision of his people and find a new place as an artist.

Company Profile

Cosmographe Productions is a production company based in Montpellier. Created by Nathalie Combe in 2007, it operates independently, with an editorial policy focused on creative documentaries and fiction films that have been broadcast on European television. Cosmographe productions have been screened and won awards prizes in numerous festivals worldwide. Selected filmography includes Hazem Alhamwi's 'From My Syrian Room', Christophe Farnarier's 'El Perdido', Elvira Diaz's 'El Patio' and Tamara Stepanyan's 'Limbo'.

Production Grant

Feature Documentary

Fall 2014

Tamara Stepanyan

Director / Screenwriter



Nathalie Combe

Producer



Limbo

Lebanon, Armenia, France, Qatar / Armenian / 2016

Runtime: 80 min

Genre: Creative Documentary

Exhibition Format: DCP 2K

Marseille, 2014. Dozens of Armenian asylum seekers are trying to survive while waiting for their applications to be considered. They live in an indeterminate space, wandering in limbo.



Marseille, 2014. Dozens of Armenian asylum seekers are waiting for their applications to be considered. They arrived in Marseille by chance, a result of the whims of smugglers. They all fled Armenia because, for one reason or another, they would incur risk of imprisonment or death. They leave behind them a country whose people have settled around the world for over a hundred years ... A country all described as desert. Now they are here, and would like to integrate into this new country, but must wait until the courts allow them to. They live in limbo: between two countries, between two lives. They are in a time and abstract space made of nothing, where life escapes them completely.

Contact

Visan

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Director's Note

This project was born one day when I was leaving a train station in Lyon. I heard a familiar language and followed the voice I heard. I discovered dozens of Armenian asylum seekers, living in hundreds of tents crammed into an enclosed garden. I was shocked. What were they doing there, so many people in this space outside the world, in this limbo? For it is in limbo that asylum seekers live, a limbo that makes indistinct both its origin and its destination. They are gone and they do not know what they can expect or what kind of life they should expect. They wait in the pain of exile, fearful of not being accepted, carrying in them both the places they have left and where they hope to settle.

Director's Biography

Tamara Stepanyan was born in Armenia and moved with her parents to Lebanon in 1994. After studying and working there, she moved to France, where she is currently developing her first narrative feature and shooting her second feature-length documentary. Stepanyan has participated in film workshops in South Korea, at the Asian Film Academy as part of the Busan International Film Festival in 2007; and in Denmark, in an exchange programme at Den Danske Filmskole, in 2012. She has won several international awards for her films.

Company Profile

Cosmographe Productions is a production company based in Montpellier. Created by Nathalie Combe in 2007, it operates independently, with an editorial policy focused on creative documentaries and fiction films that have been broadcast on European television. Cosmographe productions have been screened and won awards prizes in numerous festivals worldwide. Selected filmography includes Hazen Alhamwi's 'From My Syrian Room', Christophe Farnarier's 'El Perdido', Elvira Diaz's 'El Patio' and Tamara Stepanyan's 'Limbo'.

Founded by renowned theatre director and actor Vigen Stepanyan, **Visan** is a small Armenian production company that produces creative documentaries, short films and plays for theatre. Visan has produced a number of Stepanyan's plays, and two films by Tamara Stepanyan: 'February 19' (2011), which won the "Hayak" Armenian National Award for Best Short Fiction Film and the Best Fiction Film Award at the Lebanese Film Festival, and 'Embers' (2012), which was named Best Documentary at the Busan International Film Festival and the Golden Apricot International Film Festival.

Production Grant
Feature Documentary
Fall 2014

Marie-Clémence Andriamonta Paes
Director / Screenwriter



Viviane Dahan
Producer



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Madagascar 1947, The Sound of Silence

'1947: Ody Gasy, Basy Gasy' / Madagascar, France, Qatar / Malagasy / 2017

Runtime: 90 min
Genre: Based on a True Story, Creative Documentary
Interests: History, Identity, War
Exhibition Format: DCP 2K

1947, Madagascar: a rebellion is harshly suppressed by French colonial authorities. This unknown story will be told from a Malagasy perspective by questioning the Sikidy, our geomancy tradition.



After World War II, nearly 10,000 Malagasy soldiers travelled back to their island on a liner named Île-de-France. After helping to free Europe from fascism, they were expecting independence for Madagascar. Instead, upon reaching their homeland they were asked to return to their "indigenous" status. War veterans led a rebellion that was harshly suppressed by colonial authorities. The archives often note that the insurgents – armed only with spears and machetes – resisted for more than 18 months in the bush, thanks to the assistance of shamans and talismans. This film will explore the insurrection from a Malagasy point of view, and will do so with the support of traditional geomancy, the "sikidy" that was among the insurgents' tools.

Director's Note

"Until lions have their own historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunter" – African proverb

I want to explore the story of the 1947 insurrection in Madagascar from a Malagasy point of view, and will use our traditional healing skills to expose the facts and go beyond the silence kept around these tragic events. In Madagascar today, one consults the geomancer, as one does a psychoanalyst in the West. In both processes, the inner analysis of the patient is as important as the practitioner's knowledge. It is a way to find out what we did wrong in the past that explains the problems we face in the present. This central questioning will guide the structure of the film and will be intertwined with the memories of direct witnesses, archival footage and the places where it all happened.

Director's Biography

Marie-Clémence Andriamonta Paes was born in Antananarivo, Madagascar. She holds a Master's degree in Sociology and a CELSA diploma in Marketing and Advertising from the Sorbonne. In 1988, she launched Laterit Productions, an independent production and distribution company that focuses on cross-cultural understanding. With Cesar Paes, she signed documentaries including 'Angano... Angano... Tales from Madagascar', 'Songs and Tears of Nature' and 'Awara Soup', which have won awards at Cinema du Réel, the Festival dei Popoli and the Leipzig Film Festival. Their feature documentaries, including 'Saudade do Futuro', 'Mahaleo' and 'An Opera from the Indian Ocean' have been released theatrically in France and the USA.

Company Profile

Laterit Productions is an independent production and distribution company created in 1988 by filmmakers Marie-Clémence Andriamonta-Paes and Cesar Paes. Laterit's main ambition is to produce high-quality films combining oral culture and music for better cross-cultural understanding. 'Angano... Angano... Tales from Madagascar' has been widely broadcast, and was named one of the 20 best films of 20 years of Cinema du Réel. Among the company's films, 'Saudade do futuro' was released at the Film Forum in New York City and in 20 cinemas across Europe; 'Mahaleo', co-produced by Arte Cinema and Canal+, was a national event in Madagascar; 'An Opera from the Indian Ocean' is still programmed in theatres in France and studied in schools. 'Ady Gasy the Malagasy Way' will be launched in April, 2015.

Post-production Grant
Feature Documentary
Fall 2014

Claire Belhassine
Director / Screenwriter



Mike Lerner
Producer



The Man Behind the Microphone

Tunisia, UK, Qatar / English / 2015

Runtime: 86 min
Genre: Creative Documentary
Exhibition Format: HDCAM

An amazing story of love and family, celebrity and music. A portrait of Hedi Jouini, the godfather of Tunisian music.



Hedi Jouini is the most popular musical star in Tunisian history, known as the “Frank Sinatra of Tunisia”. His songs continue to inspire revolutionaries and conservatives alike, striking at the heart of the post-colonial social and political upheaval of Tunisia and its continuing search for identity in the wake of the Arab Spring. But why did he keep his fame hidden from his family? What dark secrets did he keep from the nation that worshipped him? ‘The Man Behind the Microphone’ reveals the incredible story behind a man and his music, and offers fascinating insight into Tunisia’s cultural evolution. The film builds a profound portrait of the godfather of Tunisian music – father to a nation yet not to his family.

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Director's Note

Two decades years after my grandfather's death, by chance I overheard Hedi's music during one of life's random moments in a taxi – and this was the key to unlocking his compelling story. My inquiry pushes the question of Hedi's unique and unusual status. Why is he revered as the Godfather to his people? How is this reflected in his relationship to the state? The story will be firmly anchored to my literal and metaphorical journey as the narrator, a very personal story of a Tunisian family – essentially using family drama to offer insight into a changing Arab culture at key moments in modern Tunisian history. And all along the way showcasing, for those not familiar with Arab pop music, some of Tunisia's best-loved classics.

Director's Biography

Claire Belhassine holds a BA in Drama and Film Arts from London University and a Master's degree in Filmmaking from the London Film School. She worked extensively in the British media as a writer and stylist for Conde Nast publications, 'Dazed and Confused' magazine and 'Entertainment News'. After completing her studies, she worked as a producer-director in the corporate world, with clients including Sony, MTV and Deutsche Bank. She was selected as part of the new writers development team on Channel 4's popular teen series 'Hollyoaks', and also worked as a script reader for Channel 4. 'The Man Behind the Microphone' is her first feature as a director.

Company Profile

Roast Beef Productions began in 2005 and has had an incredible impact in just a few years, most recently with 'The Square' and 'Pussy Riot – A Punk Prayer'. Five Roast Beef films have been presented at Sundance, and have won six awards there, two Grierson Awards and the Prix Italia, along with two Oscar nominations. We understand how to make documentaries compelling, gripping and funny. We are not afraid of “big” subjects, but our films humanise and popularise them. Neither are we afraid of original approaches to filmmaking, working with animation, hybrid doc drama forms and new technologies. As a result our films have met with success, and we have burst onto the global documentary scene, attracting funding from co-producers and getting sales and distribution deals worldwide.

Production Grant
Feature Documentary
Spring 2014

Mila Turajlic
Director / Screenwriter



Iva Plemic Divjak
Producer



Survivance
HBO Europe
Co-producing Partners

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The Other Side of Everything

'Druga Strana Svega' / Serbia, France, Qatar / Serbian / 2015

Runtime: 90 min
Exhibition Format: DCP

Ten years after Serbia's democratic revolution, a keyhole view through a locked door combines a family memoir with the portrait of a turbulent country, asking where things went wrong.



In an apartment in Belgrade there is a door that has been locked for 65 years. This film seeks the key that will unlock that door. It combines a family memoir with a portrait of a country in turmoil to reveal a disillusioned revolutionary and her struggle with the ghosts that haunt Serbia's past and present. From the vantage point of this apartment, which sits at a crossroads in the political centre of Belgrade, unique footage filmed over many years provides an intimate view of the events of recent history. More than a decade after Serbia's democratic revolution, this film reflects on the price each generation pays for taking responsibility for the country it lives in.

Director's Note

Ten years ago, I started shooting a set of locked doors in my family home, which have not been opened for more than 65 years, wanting to speak of the changes in Serbia from a very personal angle – the place where I live. Conversations with my mother, an activist against the Milosevic regime, led me to ask questions about engagement and duty. Like hundreds of others demanding democracy and change, we realised that bringing down a dictator was easy compared to the challenges to follow. "If I am a freedom fighter, the freedom I have won is the biggest failure of my life," said my mother. This chronicle of a family becomes a portrait of the choices one makes, from struggling against repression to dealing with disillusion under transition.

Director's Biography

Mila Turajlic's first feature-length documentary, 'Cinema Komunista', premiered at IDFA in 2010, and won 16 awards, including the Gold Hugo at the Chicago International Film Festival. After studying Political Science and Media at the London School of Economics and film production in Serbia, Turajlic specialised in documentary filmmaking at La Fémis in Paris. She gained industry experience working on fiction films including Mel Gibson's 'Apocalypto' and Rian Johnson's 'The Brothers Bloom' before starting to direct and produce documentaries through her own production company, Dribbling Pictures. Turajlic is a producer of the Magnificent 7 Festival of feature documentaries in Belgrade, which she helped found in 2005.

Company Profile

Dribbling Pictures is a Belgrade-based production company exclusively devoted to bold, auteur-driven documentaries. It was founded in 2003 by Boris Mitic and Mila Turajlic, and has produced their four films thus far, with two further ambitious projects currently in the making. All the company's films have won awards internationally, screened at prestigious film festivals including IDFA, Tribeca, HotDocs, Edinburgh, Abu Dhabi, Brisbane and Rio de Janeiro, and distributed in cinemas in Croatia, France, Serbia, Slovenia and the UK, and broadcast around the world on ARTE, MDR, SVT, YLE, TVP, TVC, Rossia Kultura, SKY Arts UK, and Al Jazeera, among others.

Post-production Grant

Feature Documentary

Spring 2014

Salim Abu Jabal

Director / Screenwriter / Producer



Roshmia

Palestine, UAE, Lebanon, Syria, Qatar / Arabic / 2014

Runtime: 75 min

Genre: Creative Documentary

Exhibition Format: DVCAM

Yousef and Amna, an elderly couple, live in a shack. Their lives are peaceful until the municipality of Haifa embarks on a new project, displacing them just as they are on the verge of divorce.



Since 1956, when he became a refugee from downtown Haifa's Wadi Alsaleeb neighbourhood, 80-year-old Yousef has lived with his wife Amna, a refugee from Yasoor, in a shack in Roshmia Valley. Life is quiet until the Municipality of Haifa plans to build a road across the valley to connect the Mediterranean to Mount Karmel - which means the couple's shack will be demolished, forcing them to find a new home. Their sponsor, acting as middle man between them and the municipality, attempts to negotiate compensation for them, but this will lead to tension among the three individuals.

Contact

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Director's Note

For me, 'Roshmia' symbolises the issue of forced displacement - not only for Palestinians, but also for any displaced people anywhere in the world. What makes this story interesting is the old couple, whose displacement is not only political, but also cultural and economic. Yousef and Amna represent an entire generation of refugees who have been forcibly relocated time and time again. At the same time, they demonstrate the sudden move from an environmentally conscious to a more modern and unfamiliar lifestyle. 'Roshmia' will also expose the bulldozer mentality of the Israeli state, and how it destroys not only the personal lives of citizens of the valley, but also its precious natural environment.

Director's Biography

Salim Abu Jabal was born in the occupied Golan Heights in 1971, and has worked in cinema and television as a production manager and casting director on several Palestinian and international films. He has also worked as a writer, journalist, critic and producer.

Company Profile

Boujabel Production was established by Salim Abu Jabal in Ramallah in 2011, with the aim of providing production and casting services for his films as well as for other filmmakers. The company organised and produced Film Behind the Wall, a travelling film festival in Palestine. Abu Jabal started working in the cinema field in 2004, and has directed and produced several international documentary and fiction films. He acted as casting manager for films including Najwa Najjar's 'Eyes of a Thief' (2014) and 'Pomegranates and Myrrh' (2008), and Michel Khleifi's 'Zindeeq' (2009). He has also directed and produced numerous television programmes as well as his own documentaries: 'Separation Diary' (2012); and 'The Language of Almonds' (2011).

Post-production Grant
Feature Documentary
Fall 2014

Martin DiCicco

Director / Screenwriter



Kakha Macharashvili

Producer



The Silk Railroad

USA, Georgia, Qatar / Armenian, Azerbaijani, Georgian, Russian, Turkish / 2016

Shooting Format: HD

Runtime: 80 min

Genre: Creative Documentary

Exhibition Format: DCP 2K

Wealth, opportunity, and discord collide along the route of a railroad under construction between Europe and Asia.



Touted as a 'New Silk Road', the new Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad brings dramatic change and opportunity to those along its route. This film is a portrait of the unity and animosity of transportation against a background of globalised trade, migration and shifting ethnic identity in Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. In Turkey, the railroad uses local employment to mitigate the relocation of villagers. In Azerbaijan, young men stake their claims to the new dream of wealth. In Georgia, a town faces changing demographics with xenophobia amid the arrival of foreign workers, while in Armenia, closed borders preclude the return of an isolated railway station to its Soviet-era relevance.

Contact

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Director's Note

I was drawn to make this project because the Kars-Tbilisi-Baku (BTK) train line is referred to as a "new Silk Road". This conjures ideas of prosperity, of borderless travel and global importance. These same ideas propelled the transcontinental railroad construction in the USA and the Trans-Siberian in Russia. Railroads historically have reputations as the backbones of nations on the verge of greatness: railroads as nation-builders. But will it last? Is the BTK a relic of a past century?

Director's Biography

Martin DiCicco is a cinematographer whose work has been broadcast on NHK, ESPN, the History Channel, MTV and NRJ12, among others. His other work includes campaigns for Google and Red Bull. He frequently collaborates with artists on multi-screen projections and installations, most recently at 'Made in L.A.' at the Hammer Museum in 2014. His feature documentary filmography includes 'Soundtracker', which was selected for HotDocs in 2010, and 'PUMP', which played at the Zurich International Film Festival in 2014.

Company Profile

Headed by General Director Kakha Macharashvili, **Sakdoc** is a documentary production company based in Tbilisi. The company's productions to date include Salomé Jashi's 'A Swim' (2012) and 'Bakhmaro' (2011), which was named Best Central/Eastern European Film at the Jihlava International Film Festival in the Czech Republic. Currently, the company is in production with Jashi's 'The Station'. Macharashvili's other films include Tinatin Gurchiam's 'The Machine Which Makes Everything' (2012), which won a World Cinema Documentary Directing Award at Sundance in 2013, and Nana Ekvimishvili's 'In Bloom' (2013), which was named Best Film at the Sarajevo Film Festival and won the FIPRESCI Prize in Hong Kong.

Post-production Grant

Feature Documentary

Spring 2014

Amber Fares

Director / Screenwriter / Producer



Jessica Devaney, Avi Goldstein

Producer



Contact

SocDoc Studios

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Speed Sisters

'Al-Sabbaqat' / Palestine, USA, Qatar / Arabic, English / 2014

Runtime: 80 min

Genre: Action, Coming-of-age, Documentary,

Interests: Family, Friendship, Identity, Middle East, Politics, Social Issues, Sports, Women's Interest

Exhibition Format: DCP

The Speed Sisters are the first all-woman race-car driving team in the Middle East. They're bold. They're fearless. And they're tearing up tracks all over Palestine.



Despite restrictions on movement, a motor racing scene has emerged in the West Bank. The races offer a release from the pressures and uncertainties of life under military occupation. The spirited competition between cities brings spectators out in the thousands, lining rooftops and leaning over barricades to snap photos of their favourite drivers and to catch final times on the scoreboard. Brought together by a common desire to live life on their own terms, five determined women have joined the ranks of dozens of male drivers — competing against each other for the title, for bragging rights for their hometown, and to prove that women can compete head on with the guys. Both intimate and action-filled, Speed Sisters captures the drive to defy all odds, leaving in its trail shattered stereotypes about gender and the Arab world.

Director's Note

'Speed Sisters' is a vérité-style narrative documentary that follows the story of Palestinian racing champion Marah Zahalka and the first all-woman racing team in the Middle East. Intimate and action-filled, the film shows inspiring and unexpected images from a region from which one-dimensional images saturate the media. Subtle, yet ever-present, the political context of contemporary Palestine is the backdrop for the story of a young woman fighting to achieve her dreams against all odds. 'Speed Sisters' avoids a heavy-handed approach to big political questions, allowing viewers to reflect on the lived experiences of these women. With its surprising characters and images, the film provides a fresh look at Palestinian society and challenges assumptions about both women and men in the Middle East. It captures the universal drive to follow one's dreams against all odds, and leaves in its trail shattered stereotypes about gender and the Arab world.

Director's Biography

Amber Fares, a Canadian-born filmmaker with Lebanese roots, resides in Ramallah. In the aftermath of 9/11, she left her career marketing some of Canada's biggest brands to deepen her understanding of life in the Middle East. In response to her experience, Fares co-founded SocDoc Studios to produce story-driven films that explore social issues. 'Ghetto Town' (2009), her directorial debut short, has been shown at film festivals around the world. 'Speed Sisters' is her first feature-length documentary.

Company Profile

At **SocDoc Studios**, we believe in the power of personal stories: stories that connect us to challenging issues; stories of hope, struggle and perseverance; stories that make us feel, make us think, and make us act. We create films, multi-media, social media and outreach campaigns in which people are the message. Our goal is to shine a light on tough issues, offer different perspectives and inspire curiosity and empathy.

Production Grant
Feature Documentary
Fall 2014

Maryam Ebrahimi
Director / Screenwriter



Nima Sarvestani
Producer



Stronger than a Bullet

Sweden, Qatar / Farsi / 2016

Runtime: 80 min
Genre: Based on a True Story
Interests: Politics, Psychological, Social Issues, War
Exhibition Format: DCP 2K

Saeed Sadeghi is the Iranian photographer responsible for images from the Gulf War that were used to propel the myth of a holy war to many Iranians.



Since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, war propaganda has been Iran's largest industry. In the name of combating the enemies of Islam, it serves as the political and economical engine of the country. This Holy Defence industry was created in part around photographer Saeed Sadeghi's pictures taken during the first Persian Gulf War. People were seduced by stories of Shiite honour and the place in paradise granted by a martyr's death. Many of them were children. Using the deep-rooted religious beliefs of the people, the potential existed to create an army with soldiers who were not merely fighting for their country, but for God; whose reward was not of this world, but awaited them in the eternal gardens of Paradise.

Contact
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Director's Note

Almost three decades after the Iran-Iraq War ended, I still have the same nightmare. A giant plane flies just a few centimetres over my motionless body. Reflected on it, I see thousands of skeletons. They died all those years ago; I did not. I wake with an indescribable pain in my heart, feeling a responsibility to tell the story of those thousands of boys who were sent to the front, dreaming of martyrdom and eternal paradise. Perhaps I am lucky I was born a girl, otherwise I would not have the opportunity to tell their stories. By making this film, maybe I can end my lifelong nightmare and give voice to the children who offered up their lives for a war-mongering regime.

Director's Biography

Maryam Ebrahimi was born in Iran. She studied at the Art University of Tehran and continued her education at university in Stockholm. 'No Burqas Behind Bars' (2012) was her first documentary as a co-director. It shows how laws surrounding moral crimes are used to control women in post-Taliban Afghanistan. The film was shot over a lengthy period of time inside a women's prison. It was named Best Documentary at the International Emmy Awards in 2014.

Company Profile

Over the past 26 years, **Nimafilm** has produced a variety of documentary films in which unique global issues are explored through personal life stories. The company has produced several documentaries on subjects surrounding the Middle East, about people in harsh environments fighting for their rights. By making films that comment on our society and our times, Nimafilm seeks to give those who rarely have the chance to be heard the opportunity to tell their stories. The major themes of Nimafilm's productions concern human rights, and many of the films have generated debate and won awards worldwide. 'No Burqas Behind Bars' won the Prix Europa for Best European Documentary and an International Emmy Award in 2014.

Production Grant
Feature Documentary
Fall 2014

Jewel Maranan
Director / Screenwriter / Producer



Ingmar Trost
Producer



Tondo, Beloved

'Tundong Magiliw' / The Philippines, Germany, Qatar / Filipino / 2016

Runtime: 90 min
Genre: Creative Documentary, Politics, Social Issues
Interests: Politics, Social Issues
Exhibition Format: DCP 2K

'Tondo, Beloved' is a film about four people in different stages of life - birth, youth, adulthood and death - who are caught in the path of expansion of Manila's busiest international port.



'Tondo, Beloved' is a film about four people living in the most densely populated community in the Philippines, surrounded by the country's busiest international port. The film follows them in different stages of life: a newborn in the first few days of her life; a child worker learning how to read and write; a father working at the pier; and an old widow watching over the funeral of her late husband. They witness the wealth of different nations packed as cargo, passing them by, entering and leaving Manila. As we follow the cycle of their lives, we follow the cycle of the international port. And soon, driven by the increasing traffic of global trade, the port will be expanded, demolishing the spaces where they now live.

Contact
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Director's Note

Arriving in Manila for my university studies, I was one of the many thousands who pass through Tondo's passenger ports. How did this great place, once the womb of struggle for Filipino nationhood, become the locus of settlement for the country's poorest? I became interested in the contrasts and ironies of Tondo's miserable living conditions compared with its triumphant history of revolution. In 2010, a privatisation deal and a blueprint for the port's expansion were signed. Tens of thousands will be displaced. In the beginning, I was drawn by Tondo's past. Now I'm drawn by its present and future, and the question of what it represents for the "developing world" in the face an established order of supremacy that is as certain as it is volatile.

Director's Biography

Jewel Maranan is an independent documentary filmmaker from the Philippines. She began working on independent documentaries in 2008, tackling conflict situations in Metro Manila. Over the years, she has developed a deep interest in the ways in which history inches through ordinary life. Maranan is also an active participant in efforts to help develop Southeast Asian documentary work through SEA DocNet, a project-based network organized by the Goethe Institute in Southeast Asia. She currently manages Cinema Is Incomplete, a cinematheque, film-distribution centre and production company, which she launched in 2011.

Company Profile

Sutor Kolonko was founded in 2010 to produce challenging documentaries and narrative feature films driven by strong stories, told with a distinctive style. The company strives to be a point of departure and harbour, especially for young writers and directors. In 2014, the company released Juris Kursietis's 'Modris', which had its world premiere at TIFF and received a Special Mention at the San Sebastian Film Festival; and Ingo Haeb's 'The Chambermaid Lynn', which won the German Cinema New Talent Award for Best Actress at the Munich Film Festival, as well as both the Award for Best Artistic Contribution and the FIPRESCI Prize at the Montreal World Film Festival. Their third feature film, Isabelle Stever's 'The Weather Indoors' (WT) is currently in post-production. The feature documentaries in production include Andre Hörmann's 'The Punch' and Chico Pereira's 'Donkeyote'.

Post-production Grant

Feature Documentary

Spring 2014

Mahmood Soliman

Director / Screenwriter



Nivine Affy

Producer



We Have Never Been Kids

'Abadan Lam Nakom Atfalan' / Egypt, UAE, Qatar / Arabic / 2014

Runtime: 97 min

Genre: Coming-of-age, Creative Documentary

Interests: Children, Politics, Social Issues, Women's Interest, Youth

Exhibition Format: DCP

An Egyptian woman is trying to look after her four children, before and after her divorce from their father. However, over time circumstances around her gradually change on all levels.



Since 2003, Mahmood Soliman has tracked the subjects of his 2003 documentary 'Living Among Us'. The intervening 10 years have been the most inflamed decade in Egypt's modern history. This film reveals how, over the last decade, Nadia's eldest, once the best student at school, has become a 21-year-old drug dealer; how 11-year-old Omnia, her only daughter, came to life; and how Nadia herself, from being a strong woman struggling for her kids and trying to escape from a cruel husband, became a mother in her fifties striding through the streets of Cairo in search of her sons. The collapse of this family reflects Egypt's deterioration, especially in the last 10 years of Mubarak era, and the attempts of the remains of his regime to thwart the January Revolution.

Contact

January for Arts and Culture

Productions

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Director's Note

I have always been attracted to simmering humanitarian moments, and I love to convey these to others. This is what I have presented in most of my literary and dramatic works. Now, I am inspired to present exceptional moments in the life of my film's protagonist - moments that reflect life, moments of victory, collapse, failures and sorrow, of escape, happiness and pain. I want to make of these stories a mirror of the problems and aspirations of my society. A second concern is to reach out with my films to the furthest viewers in the smallest village in the world. I hope that everyone will connect with what I present.

Director's Biography

Mahmood Soliman graduated from the Higher Cinema Institute of Cairo in 1997. He has published several social and political essays in Egyptian and Arab newspapers, and three short-story collections. Soliman has been awarded several prizes in the Arab world for his literary work, and has written, produced and directed three fiction and one documentary short films, which have been selected for more than 300 international film festivals and have won 27 prizes. His first feature film, 'Happy New Year', is currently in development.

Company Profile

January for Arts & Culture Production takes an interest in independent works, with its own approach to cinema that differs from the commercial requirements of the marketplace. The company has produced two short fiction films: Mahmood Soliman's 'Red & Blue' (2006) and 'Sometimes' (2008), which participated in over 100 film festivals, won numerous awards, and were both sold to TV5. It acted as executive producer on the Arabic-language version of 3,000 minutes of documentary and animated episodes of 'The Japanese Environmental Technology' for NHK, and is currently developing 'Happy New Year', Soliman's first feature-length narrative film.

Production Grant
Feature Documentary
Fall 2014

Kaouther Ben Hania
Director / Screenwriter



Habib Attia
Producer



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Zaineb Hates the Snow

'Zaynab Takrahou Ethalj' / Tunisia, France, Qatar / Arabic / 2016

Runtime: 80 min
Genre: Coming-of-age, Creative Documentary
Interests: Children, Identity, Immigration, Social Issues
Exhibition Format: DCP 2K

Zaineb, a nine-year-old Tunisian girl, lost her father. Her mother is going to remarry - in Canada, where Zaineb can finally see snow! But Zaineb has decided to hate the snow.



2009. Nine-year-old Zaineb's father has just died in a car accident. Overnight, the house turns from a place of light to a place of dark. But one day, Zaineb notices a change: suddenly, her mother starts smiling again. Zaineb realises that her mother is in love, and that she will marry a Tunisian man who lives in Canada. She begins to hate her mother for it. More than anything, Zaineb doesn't want to leave her beloved Tunis. She has never seen snow, yet she knows she'll hate it. Covering six years in the life of a charismatic young girl and her changing family life, 'Zaineb Hates the Snow' is a beautiful and poignant coming-of-age documentary told through the eyes of a wide-eyed young émigré.

Director's Note

I am fond of small stories, those concerning ordinary people that, through the special fate of a person, can teach us about ourselves. Zaineb's story is about introduction to life and to the world of adults, but it is also the story of a mother-daughter relationship. No longer a child, Zaineb is not yet an adult. She has reached an age when she needs to assert her opinions, to challenge her mother, to require a certain respect for her father's memory. It is also an age where one learns to be less selfish and more sensitive towards others. Zaineb will learn much about the life of adults and the complexity of their feelings. It is the initiatory process that is of interest to me in this story, because of its universality.

Director's Biography

Kaouther Ben Hania was born in Tunisia. She studied cinema at EDAC, at La Fémis and at the Sorbonne. Her filmography includes 'Me, My Sister and the Thing' (short, 2006); 'Wooden Hand' (short, 2013); 'Imams Go to School', which had its premiere at the International Documentary Festival Amsterdam in 2010; and the feature film 'Challat of Tunis' (2013), which was the opening film at ACID at the Festival de Cannes, was named Best First Film in Namur, and showed at festivals in San Sebastian, Busan and Antalya, among others. Ben Hania is currently shooting her second feature-length documentary, 'Zaineb Hates the Snow', and her second feature-length narrative, 'I Hate My Life'.

Company Profile

Since 1983, **CinéTéléfilms** has been one of the leading production companies in Tunisia and the Arab world. The company's latest ventures include several creative documentaries and feature films, including Kaouther Ben Hania's 'Challat of Tunis' (2014), which opened the Acid Programme at the Festival de Cannes, won the Best First Film award at Namur, Best Director and Best Film at Beirut, and was selected for Dubai, San Sebastian and Busan; Rashid Masharawi's 'Palestine Stereo' (2013), which appeared at TIFF, Dubai and Chicago; Hinde Boujemaa's 'It Was Better Tomorrow' (2012), which premiered in official selection at Venice, won the Best Arabic Director award at Dubai, was named Best Documentary in Douze Doc Days, and screened in Stockholm and Namur; and Mourad Ben Cheikh's 'No More Fear' (2011), which appeared in the official selection at Cannes, Busan, Taormina, Sheffield and Dubai, among others.

Short Narrative

Light Sounds

Opening Doors

The Trophy

Waves '98

Short Documentary

Concrete Dreams: Some Roads Lead Home

Short Experimental or Essay

In the Future, They Ate from the Finest Porcelain

Web Series

Dr. Hamood Show

Post-production Grant

Short Narrative

Fall 2014

Karem Kamel

Director / Screenwriter



Rasha Mkachar

Producer



Light Sounds

Egypt, Qatar / English, Sinhalese / 2015

Runtime: 18 min

Genre: Docufiction, Drama

Two lives, two dreams, a mosque, and the desire to be heard.



Inseparable, though not exactly by choice, an unlikely duo of Sri Lankan immigrants work together as cleaners of the washroom neighbouring a mosque, and are part of an eclectic, tight-knit community of blue-collar workers whose lives revolve around the mosque. Silent but whimsical, Sajid spends his days staring out of a barred washroom window, napping and praying (in that order) on the plush carpets of the mosque and playing pranks on visitors by “accidentally” splashing water on them. It’s never deliberate when he drags down the more balanced, intelligent Razzak, who looks after him like an older brother. He gets bored, wants more, and is consequently perpetually in need of being bailed out.

Contact

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Director's Note

This project originated from my daily trips to a mosque where I developed a rapport with the staff working in the nearby washroom. Several incidents I witnessed firsthand helped me develop the characters and bring their true essence to the page. If one thing stands out, I hope it will be the project's authenticity, whether from personal experience, research or the casting of non-professional actors to play themselves. I want to bring to the screen those seemingly trivial moments in the lives of people who are essentially ignored that, upon further scrutiny, provide wonderful glimpses of humanity. A portion of the support received from the Doha Film Institute will be contributed to our friends in the film, who allowed us to capture their world and shared our cinematic journey.

Director's Biography

Karem Kamel is an Egyptian-American filmmaker and a native of New York City. He studied Film at Hunter College, where he made his directorial debut with the short film 'Lucky Night', featuring a young Lady Gaga. He has held positions at ABC and the Sundance Film Institute, where he was involved in various workshops at the Institute's Summer Labs. His most recent short, 'The BACKyard', premiered at New York's Big Apple Film Festival. Kamel has also worked at Columbia University, and he currently works at the Doha Film Institute.

Development Grant

Short Narrative

Fall 2014

Nora Al Subai

Director



Annemarie Jacir

Screenwriter



Juan Andres Hodgson

Producer



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Red Castle Films

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Opening Doors

Qatar, Canada / Arabic

Runtime: 15 min

Genre: Based on a True Story

Facing opposition from some parts of her community, Amna Mahmoud, a courageous Qatari woman, opened the first school for girls in Qatar, in 1957. This is her story.



'Opening Doors' tells the true story of Amna Mahmoud who, from her early childhood, dreamed of teaching the Holy Qur'an to Qatari girls. A devout Muslim, she began her teaching career when still a girl, holding informal classes in her home, teaching girls to memorise the Qur'an. Later, she began a struggle to open a formal school for girls. In the face of strong opposition from some voices in the community, she persevered, until a fatwa was issued by the country's leading Imam, declaring that education for girls and women was not prohibited by the Qur'an. The Emir of Qatar supported Mahmoud, and her school for girls became an important breakthrough in the education of women in Qatar.

Director's Note

'Opening Doors' will tell a true story, based in Qatar, that symbolises the increasingly successful struggle of women in the region for access to education. Throughout the world – from Europe and North America, to South America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East – women have had to engage in similar battles over the years. This story about Amna Mahmoud, a young Qatari woman, and her fight to open the first school for girls in Qatar will help women in other parts of the world relate to the achievements of women in the Gulf and MENA region. It is my hope that the film might also cause MENA region women to reflect on their own successes, on the power of one woman's determination, and on the bonds they share with women around the world.

Director's Biography

Nora Al Subai was born and raised in France and lived there most of her life. She graduated from Carnegie Mellon in 2008 with a B.Sc. in Computer Science. She has a passion for filmmaking and is collaborating with the Doha Film Institute to make films and shape the up-and-coming film industry in Qatar. She won a Best Short Film award at the Ajyal Youth Film Festival in 2013 for her short film 'My Hero', which she wrote and directed.

Company Profile

Red Castle Films is a creative film company and full-service production team based in the heart of Gastown, in Vancouver, Canada. With decades of experience behind us, we approach each project with the highest standards of quality. Producers of films, commercials and music videos, we strive to tell great stories and put our passion up on the screen.

Production Grant

Short Narrative

Fall 2014

Nour Wazzi

Director



Shirine Best

Screenwriter / Producer



The Trophy

Lebanon, UK, Qatar / English / 2015

Runtime: 20 min

Genre: Thriller

Exhibition Format: DCP 2K

Sometimes the ones that love us most, can cause the greatest harm...



A sickly child's life hangs in the balance when her Middle Eastern father kidnaps her. As her mother hunts her down, a greater danger gradually reveals itself. 'The Trophy' is a high stakes, atmospheric thriller inspired by true events. It is a gripping story that will challenge and deceive your expectations.

Contact

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Director's Note

What truly excites me about this story is that, underneath all the tension and mystery, lies a heart-wrenching story about a nine-year-old girl whose life is threatened by someone she trusted most. The thriller will convey an unnerving and suspenseful tone painted by starkness and stillness - imagine creeping wide shots in a dark empty parking lot or holding a close-up longer than feels comfortable. When the stakes are raised, the pace will be heightened and punctuated by fast fluid shots and abrupt cuts. The calculated use of music and sound, and its absence, will be key to drawing out this unsettling world. Getting under your skin, this chilling film aims to say something important about the human condition and our prejudices, while being entertaining on a visceral level.

Director's Biography

Over the past ten years, producer-director **Nour Wazzi** has amassed awards for a number of shorts, including 'Up on the Roof', which stars Maisie Williams ('Game of Thrones') and Earl Cameron ('Inception'), was named Best Film at Naoussa and won the Jury Special Mention at Magma; 'Shackled', starring Emilia Clarke ('Game of Thrones'), which won the Golden Palm at the Mexico International Film Festival; and 'Habibti', starring Hiam Abbass ('The Visitor') and Yasmine Almassri ('Caramel'), which was selected for over 30 festivals and won five awards internationally. Nour has a number of projects in the pipeline, including the feature-length dark comedy 'The Opposite of Everything', which has recently been shortlisted for the BFI/Film London/BBC Films Microwave scheme.

Company Profile

Finished Films and **Panacea Productions** have collaborated on a number of projects, including 'Shackled', starring Emilia Clarke ('Game of Thrones'), which was selected for the Doha Film Institute's Ajyal Youth Film Festival in 2014. Aiming to bring distinctive, compelling and thought-provoking films to a wide audience, we are united in our core belief that story is key, and are dedicated to spending the necessary time perfecting scripts in order to produce great cinema. The team, who between them have over 30 years of experience in the industry and credits on more than 25 feature-length films, have worked together on a number of films, including the Oscar-nominated documentary 'Waste Land' and the Grierson Award-winning 'The Bengali Detective', as well as a handful of award-winning short films and music videos.

Production Grant

Short Narrative

Spring 2014

Elie Dagher

Director / Screenwriter / Producer



Waves '98

'Moug '98' / Lebanon, Qatar / Arabic / 2015

Runtime: 15 min

Genre: Animation, Fantasy

Interests: Biography, Coming-of-age, Identity, Social Issues

Disillusioned with his life in the suburbs of Beirut, a student's discovery leads him through a rocky path in search for home through a surreal world of self-reflection.



Disillusioned with his life in the suburbs of Beirut, Omar feels his teenage years are wasting away. One day, on his regular lunch break atop his school building, he spots something strange and beautiful sticking out from the grey landscape of the city. This giant discovery draws him in and opens his mind to a whole new world, leading him down a rocky path in search for home through surreal surroundings and self-reflection.

Contact

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Director's Note

The idea for this film sprung from my own experiences growing up in Beirut, as well as my relationship to the city today. At the end of the 1990's, Lebanon was in recovery mode and more segregated than ever. I spent the first 16 years of my life on the outskirts of the city, never stepping foot in the centre or crossing to the other side, until the urge to discover it pushed me to venture into a new environment. It is astonishing to break out of social restrictions and boundaries, make new encounters, learn the history and listen to the stories of the city. I intend to tell a story of the coming of age of my character in a numb and daunting environment.

Director's Biography

Born in Beirut in 1985, **Elie Dagher** currently lives in Europe and Lebanon. After graduating in Art Direction, Illustration and Animation from the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts in 2007, Elie focused on New Media and Contemporary Art Studies at Goldsmiths College, London. Working in cross-media platforms including film, video and painting, Dagher's work explores the correlation and possibilities created through the play among cultures, histories and fictions.

Production Grant
Short Documentary
Spring 2014

Saba Karim Khan
Director / Screenwriter

Concrete Dreams: Some Roads Lead Home

Pakistan, Qatar / English

Runtime: 50 min

Interests: Social Issues

After decades of disillusioned hope, conflict and militancy as a so-called 'failed state', Pakistan is paving a unique path for its 1.5 million street children, through alternate, creative initiatives and showing the world that some roads lead home.



'Concrete Dreams' is the story of Pakistan's battle against its age-old issue of rehabilitating its 1.5-million street children and the journey of four such 'slum dog millionaires' from living on the streets to becoming national heroes. The film follows the real-life stories of the courageous, resilient street children who represented Pakistan in the 2014 Street Child World Cup, but more importantly it signals a call to action through celebrating the innovative introduction of sports to combat this predicament, and showing how these children are being taught to stand on their own feet and feel included in wider society. This timely narrative can solicit much required attention, advocacy and action in order to bring about structured and sustainable transformation in the lives of one of the most vulnerable sections of Pakistani society.

Contact
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Director's Note

I want to tell a story of the evolving landscape of a nation that has been marred by images of militancy, violence and extremism, and bring to the fore a story of the courage, resilience, ingenuity and the optimism that emerges within. Pakistan: ever paradoxical, continuously in flux and entirely unpredictable; a 'failed state' in the popular media. While I would like to showcase the scale of the predicament through jarring images of Pakistan's street life and its 1.5 million inhabitants, more importantly, I want to highlight the courage of these young people and how they are altering their lives through creative interventions. At each stage, this film will speak through the voice of the children - the true heroes of this endeavour.

Director's Biography

Saba Karim Khan studied Anthropology at the University of Oxford, where she conducted research into human trafficking, and the crisis surrounding national identity in Pakistan. During roles with the Citi Foundation and the Abu Dhabi Group, Khan worked to launch programmes aimed at creating sustainable impact in Pakistan. These efforts focused on tackling honour killing, promoting female entrepreneurship and vocational training, and rehabilitating children affected by the war on terror and natural disasters, and resulted in Citi winning the Global CSR Award and the Asian CSR Award. Khan currently lives in Doha, and is interested in using visual media as a means of communicating stories of courage, ingenuity and resilience, and sharing an often-neglected perspective on Pakistan.

Production Grant

Short Experimental or Essay
Fall 2014

Larissa Sansour
Director / Producer



Soren Lind
Screenwriter



In the Future, They Ate from the Finest Porcelain

'Fi Al-Mustaqbal, Akaloo min Afkhar Anwaa' Al-Porsaleen' / Palestine, UK, Qatar / Arabic / 2015

Runtime: 25 min

Genre: Animation, Science Fiction

Interests: History, Politics

Exhibition Format: DCP 2K

A narrative resistance group buries porcelain in Palestine for future archaeologists to excavate, seeking to influence history and support future claims to their vanishing lands.



'In the Future, They Ate from the Finest Porcelain' resides in the cross-section of sci-fi, archaeology and politics. It explores the role of myth in history, fact and national identity, and is a counter-measure to the politicised archaeology used to justify the confiscation of Palestinian land. A resistance group buries porcelain that signifies a civilisation of hi-tech Palestinians. When unearthed, this tableware will prove the existence of this fictional people. By implementing a myth of its own, the work becomes a historical intervention – the de facto creation of a nation. In the future, spaceships loaded with porcelain journey back in time, finally revealing the porcelain cargo and accomplishing the intended revision of regional history.

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Director's Note

Central to my practice is the tug and pull between fiction and reality. In recent years, I have explored the role of myth and fiction on fact, history, and national, political and personal identity; here, that focus takes the form of historical intervention. By interfering with existing narratives, I attempt to negotiate past events, and seek to influence future versions of history. This film is inspired by events in present-day Palestine where, in the absence of any real peace process, archaeology has become the battleground for settling land disputes. Unearthed history is used as evidence to support arguments for rightful ownership of land in the present day. By implementing a myth of its own, my work becomes a historical and narrative intervention – de facto creating a nation.

Director's Biography

Larissa Sansour was born in East Jerusalem, Palestine, and studied fine arts in London, New York City and Copenhagen. Her work is interdisciplinary, immersed in current political dialogue and utilises film, photography, sculpture and installation. Central to her work is the tug and pull between fiction and reality. Her work features in film festivals, galleries and museums worldwide. Her most recent film, 'Nation Estate', won an award at the Oberhausen Film Festival in 2013. Recent solo exhibitions have been at the Turku Art Museum in Finland, the Photographic Centre in Copenhagen, Kulturhuset in Stockholm, Lawrie Shabibi in Dubai and DEPO in Istanbul.

Company Profile

Spike Film and Video provides specialised exhibition, production and post-production services to the art and heritage sectors. Our team works nationally and internationally with artists, arts organisations, galleries and museums on the development and delivery of their moving-image projects. Established in April 2013, Spike Film and Video combines highly experienced and knowledgeable staff with an extensive range of resources to deliver large-scale moving-image installations and film and video productions.

Post-production Grant

Web Series

Spring 2014

Ali Al Anssari

Director



Ahmed Ibrahim Al Baker, Mohammed Al Hamadi, Khaled Al Jaber

Producer



Dr. Hamood Show

Qatar / Arabic / 2014



Starring Mohammed Al Dosari and Qatari wrestler Ali Al Naimi, 'Dr. Hamood Show' is a 15-episode comedy/reality web series, in which each 15-minute sheds light on some of the social issues common to Qatari youth and in the Arab world, using comedy and sarcasm.

Contact

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Director's Biography

Ali Al Anssari was born in 1992, and is a media student at Bangor University in North Wales. He began practising photography many years ago and is now making the transition to cinematography and directing. Al-Ansari directed 'i', one of his first films, in 2012; it has been invited to numerous film festivals, and was featured in the Cannes Film Festival's Short Film Corner.

Company Profile

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

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