



68°

Festival del film

Locarno

5–15 | 8 | 2015

Open Doors

8–11 | 8 | 2015

Focus on:

Four countries from the Maghreb
(Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia)

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Director
Nadia Rais

Biography

Nadia Rais was born in Tunis, where she took a degree in art studies and techniques from the city's Institute of Fine Arts. She has taken part in several exhibitions and made the animated features *L'Ambouba*, *L'Mrayet* and *Survival Visa*. Her short films have been selected for a number of festivals, including the Festival international du film d'animation d'Annecy, winning several awards.

Selected filmography

L'Ambouba (2009)

L'Mrayet (2012)

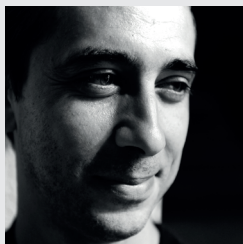
Survival Visa (2014)

Production company

Propaganda Productions



Producer
Imed Marzouk



Producer
Badi Chouka

Profile

Propaganda Productions is a Tunisian film production company which was set up in 2002 by Imed Marzouk and Néjib Belkadhi.

To date it has produced numerous projects, including feature films, documentaries, short subjects (fiction and animation) and specially commissioned films, in particular co-productions with France, Qatar and Belgium.

Selected filmography

VHS Kahloucha, Néjib Belkadhi (2006)

Bastardo, Néjib Belkadhi (2013)

Oiseaux de nuit, Leyla Bouzid (2014)

Aller simple

Three parallel stories overlap in *Aller simple*, featuring three different heroes, each of whom develops in some way in his own sphere.

The first is Zied, a young Tunisian artist seeking to escape reprisals by attempting to cross the frontier and leave the country. Typifying the rest of his generation, Zied represents the perhaps naïve, perhaps lucid dreams of young people who refuse to bend to the inflexible rules imposed by their "elders".

The next hero is the Sheikh, or wise man, whose wisdom is however limited to his name, which he carries as an honorific title. The Sheikh is the main character in *The Epistle of Forgiveness* by the Syrian poet and philosopher Abûl 'Ala al-Ma'arri. After numerous attempts he manages to gain access to Paradise and visit the garden of Eden, discovering its carnal delights, the goblets of wine, fermented beer, rivers of honey, sumptuous banquets, animals recreated in the flesh and barely tasted, everlasting virgins... His comings and goings in Paradise remind us of a persistent set of attitudes in the Muslim world, still tied to its contradictions today.

Lastly there is Mouldi, who is none other than an embodiment of the "Sheikh" in this earthly life. His particular Paradise is the exercise of power and upward social mobility. His religious habit is an ornamental accessory to his designs.

All three will successfully negotiate the passage to a different world.

Director's note

This project for a full-length animated feature is freely adapted from *The Epistle of Forgiveness* (*Risālat al-ghufrān*) by the Syrian poet and philosopher Abûl 'Ala al-Ma'arri (973-1057).

Living in an era of political chaos, Abûl 'Ala clung to a simple rule: in order to live in peace, one must force oneself not to think, and if one must think, then thought must be expressed in parables, because freedom of thought and doctrinal criticism, called "Zindaqua" at the time, were regarded as crimes and punishable by death.

Today, freedom of thought is just as alien to our Arab-Muslim societies, whose decline has become patently obvious.

Aller simple is intended as a cry for freedom in the face of a system collapsing beneath the weight of dogma and prohibition.

Technical information

Animation · 75'
Digital · Color

Production status

Writing & development

Shooting language

Arabic

Shooting start

10/2017

Total budget

425.000 Euro

Funds secured

20.000 Euro

Production company

Propaganda Productions
propaganda@gnet.tn



Director
Hassan Legzouli

Biography

Born in Morocco, Hassan Legzouli has lived in France since 1983. After studying mathematics and automation, he switched to filmmaking. In 1994 he gained a diploma in direction from the INSAS film school in Brussels, Belgium. He is also a screen writer and script doctor.

Selected filmography

Quand le soleil fait tomber les moineaux (1999)
Tenja (2004)
Le Veau d'or (2013)

Production company

Zilis Films



Producer
Mohamed Ulad

Profile

Zilis Films (formerly Les Films de Brooklyn) was set up in 1990 by Mohamed Ulad. Its registered office and headquarters are in Asilah (Tangier province) in northern Morocco. The company has produced several short and medium-length fiction subjects, documentaries and two full-length features.

Selected filmography

Quand le soleil fait tomber les moineaux,
Hassan Legzouli (1999)
Le Harem de madame Ousmane,
Nadir Moknèche (2000)
Hercule contre Hermès, Mohamed Ulad (2012)

Dieu reconnaîtra les siens

After ten long years in the service of the "Islamist Internationale", which has taken him from France to London, from Bosnia to Pakistan and Afghanistan, Hamid, now around 30, returns to his birthplace in northern France. He is generally believed to have been killed in Bosnia, a rumor which is extremely convenient for him, especially as far as his family is concerned. All the same, he has to see his kid brother Rafiq: when their mother was sick, Hamid took care of him, and they were always very close. One thing leads to another, and eventually Rafiq reunites his older brother with family and friends, in particular with Ghizlaine, the love of his life since schooldays. But Hamid is not back on a nostalgia trip: he has been sent on a mission by the "Organization" to kill the imam Sahraoui, a defector hiding out in the town.

Director's note

In 2005 I found myself in New York for the first time, at the Tribeca Film Festival. I spent hour after hour pacing out the site of the Twin Towers. I gazed at the gaping hole in the ground as if seeking an explanation as to how 9/11 could ever have happened.

Without 9/11, my story would never have existed. Today, Al Qaeda has been replaced by Islamic State. The Arab Springs are an attempt to show that alternatives to fundamentalism exist. It is time for filmmakers from Arab-Muslim backgrounds, like myself, to address this side of our history, to try to understand, denounce and exorcise it.

Technical information

Fiction · 100'
35mm · Color

Production status

Writing & development

Shooting language

French, Arabic,
English, Urdu

Shooting start

03/2017

Total budget

1.900.000 Euro

Funds secured

-

Production company

Zilis Films
aderj@aol.com



Director
Karim Moussaoui

Biography

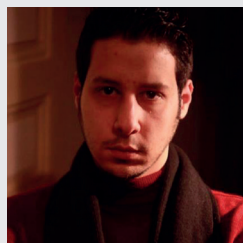
Born in 1976 in Jijel, Algeria, Karim Moussaoui became a film programmer in Algiers. For a number of years he worked as an assistant for directors such as Tariq Teguia and Nadir Moknache. In 2013 he made *Les Jours d'avant* and he is now working on *En attendant les hirondelles*, a full-length fiction feature currently at the development stage.

Filmography

Petit déjeuner (2003)
Ce qu'on doit faire (2006)
Les Jours d'avant (2013)

Production company

Taj Intaj



Producer
Jaber Debzi

Profile

Taj Intaj is a film production and distribution company based in Algiers. Set up by Adila Bendimerad in 2011, its mission is to support, assist and develop film projects from young talents. Its current main project is *En attendant les hirondelles*, a full-length fiction feature being developed with director Karim Moussaoui.

Selected filmography

Les Jours d'avant, Karim Moussaoui (2013)

En attendant les hirondelles

Mourad has become a wealthy and important businessman. He tries to avoid any problems in his life, in which the priorities are, in his view, his work, his wife and his son.

Aïcha wants to put the past behind her and devote herself to a new life as a married woman. Accompanied by her father and a neighbor, she sets out on a journey to her new family on the other side of the country.

Dahman is a doctor and he, too, hopes to start a new chapter in his life. He wants to marry his cousin and is waiting patiently for the promotion which will allow him to attain a new level of social status.

All three will have to face the consequences of a choice made in the recent past.

Director's note

In the 1990s Algeria went through an unprecedented civil war. For ten years there was conflict between armed groups and the military. The fighting left 200,000 dead, and tens of thousands displaced from their homes in high-risk zones. In addition the country's economy, already strained by the sharp drop in oil prices, collapsed completely.

This grim situation lasted to the onset of the 2000s, but for us the new decade brought with it hopes of change. Could we get over this national tragedy? We decided to believe we could - having seen death close up, we were going to cling to life. We wanted to work, sow the seed and reap the harvest, laugh and love.

I thought it would be enough for us to love life, for it to love us, too. The years 2000-2010 saw oil prices reach all-time highs. Consumer goods were imported in record quantities and Algerians discovered the pleasures of shopping and mass consumption. Despite financial prosperity and a previously unknown standard of living, however, another kind of distress persists unchanged - the kind that lingers on forever, never learning from the mistakes of the past. We are caught up all too quickly in the new delights discovered despite (or because of) globalization, and so we gorge unstintingly on anything that can make us forget the traumas of the recent past.

This is the background against which the stories in my film play out. First and foremost they are social stories, about ordinary people living ordinary lives. The screenplay develops a series of portraits of men and women coming to terms with everyday life and the recent history of Algeria. It brings to the screen people's aspirations for a better life (through their desire, will and strategy), set against the actual accomplishment of such aspirations. The idea is to allow the viewer to glimpse the kind of social stalemate that can result from a purely functional system and from self-contradictory thinking. At the same time, the intention is to portray the relations between men and women, their individual places within society, and to single out their responsibilities in building modern Algerian society and working towards changing it for the future.

My characters are at a turning point in their personal lives, yet they are not and do not want to be actors for change.

Technical information

Fiction · 120'
Digital · Color

Production status

Writing & development

Shooting language

Algerian Arabic

Shooting start

05/2016

Total budget

1.000.000 Euro

Founds secured

-

Production company

Taj Intaj
djaberdebzi@gmail.com



Director
Mohamed Ben Attia

Biography

Mohamed Ben Attia studied audiovisual communication at the University of Valenciennes in France after graduating from the Institut de Hautes Etudes Commerciales in Tunis in 1998. He has directed five short films, *Romantisme* (2004), *Kif Lokhrin* (Silver award at FESPACO 2006), *Mouja* (2010), *Loi 76* (2011) and *Selma* (2014) selected in competition at Festival International du Court Métrage de Clermont Ferrand 2014.

Selected filmography

Mouja (2010)

Loi 76 (2011)

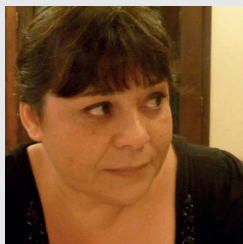
Selma (2014)

Production company

Nomadis Images



Producer
Dora Bouchoucha



Producer
Lina Chaabane

Profile

Nomadis has produced several feature films such as *Demain, je brûle* by Mohamed Ben Smail (Venice Critics Week 1998), *Baraket* by Djamila Sahraoui (Berlinale Forum 2006), *Satin rouge* (Berlinale Forum 2002) and *Buried Secrets* (Orizonti, Venice Mostra 2009) by Raja Amari and many short films. Nomadis has also line produced many Tunisian and foreign feature films.

Selected filmography

Buried Secrets, Raja Amari (2009)

It Was Better Tomorrow, Hinde Boujemaa (2012)

Cursed Be the Phosphate, Sami Tlili (2012)

Inhebek Hedi

Hedi is a simple young man. He is neither very talkative, nor reactive and does not expect much from the life that is traced for him. Indifferent to everything around him, he just takes life as it comes. He allows his authoritarian and overwhelming mother to organise his marriage to Khedija. He allows his boss to send him on a prospection trip to Mahdia during the week of his wedding celebrations. And he allows Ahmed, his brother who has come back from France especially to take part in the ceremony, to dictate how he should behave. In other words, he takes it all as it comes. He understands what is happening to him, but he just waits for things to go by.

In Mahdia, he meets Rim who works as an activity leader in a hotel, a seaside resort that is losing its tourists.

Intrigued by her insouciance and frivolity, Hedi gets involved in a passionate love relationship with her.

In the mean time while the wedding preparations go on, Hedi is finally forced to make a choice.

Director's note

Voluntarily conceived as a "love at first sight" story in post-revolution Tunisia that deconstructs the hero's life, this story is an assessment of Tunisian youth today. There are no weapons, no demonstrations, no heroes climbing over barricades offering their chests to bullets. My intention is to lift the veil on this youth that is groping, moving forward and back. Like many others, Hedi attempts to free himself from tradition and finally chooses to change things from the inside. By telling a story of characters trying to do what they can with what they have, I wanted to paint the portrait of Tunisia today, a country in the throes of a deep social, religious and economic changes.

Technical information
Fiction · 90' · Digital · Color

Production status
Pre-production

Shooting language
Tunisian Arabic

Shooting start
09/2015

Total budget
670.000 Euro

Funds secured
400.000 Euro

Production company
Nomadis Images
nomadis.images@gmail.com



Director
Mehdi Ben Attia

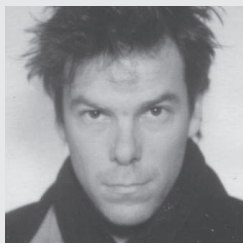
Biography

Mehdi Ben Attia was born in Tunis in 1968. As a screen writer he has credits for *Loin* (*Far*, by André Téchiné, 2001), *La Vie privée* (*Private Life*, by Zina Modiano, 2005), *Impardonnables* (*Unforgivable*, Téchiné, 2011) and a number of TV series. He has directed two full-length features: *Le Fil* (*The String*), in Tunisia, with Claudia Cardinale, Antonin Stahly and Salim Kechiouche, and *Je ne suis pas mort*, in France, with Mehdi Dehbi, Maria de Medeiros and Emmanuel Salinger.

Selected filmography

En face, co-directed by Zina Modiano (1999)
Le fil (2009)
Je ne suis pas mort (2012)

Production company
4 A 4 Productions



Producer
David Mathieu-Mahias

Profile

4 A 4 Productions has produced some forty short and medium-length films since it was first set up in 1997. After turning mainly to full-length features in 2004, the company's highlight productions have included *Un enfant de toi* (*A Child of Yours*, Jacques Doillon, 2012), *La Ligne blanche* (O. Torres, 2010), *La Femme invisible* (*The Invisible Woman*, A. Teyssier, 2009), *L'Enfant de Kaboul* (B. Akram, 2009) and *Les Amitiés maléfiques* (Emmanuel Bourdieu, 2006).

Selected filmography

Les Amitiés maléfiques,
Emmanuel Bourdieu (2006)
La Femme invisible, Agathe Teyssier (2009)
Un enfant de toi, Jacques Doillon (2012)

L'Amour des hommes

Present-day Tunis. Amel, a 25-year old photographer, lives with her husband Nabil in the attractive apartment owned by her parents-in-law in the heart of a working-class neighborhood. Amel has achieved considerable success a series of self-portraits in which she poses as various fictional characters. But her happy life is devastated when Nabil is killed in an accident. Amel would be left alone in the world, were it not for the affection shown by Taïeb, her father-in-law. Taking refuge in her work, she starts a new series of portraits, this time taking pictures of street kids. She finds herself particularly stirred by Rabah, one of the youths, but is also attracted to Sami, a young intellectual colleague. Surrounded by the all too perfect memory of her husband, the increasingly oppressive attentions of Taïeb and the excitement of the photo shoots with her young models, Amel discovers a new life.

Is it possible that the loss of someone much loved becomes a liberation in the end? In a conservative Muslim society, how can one live one's desires without becoming marginalized? How can a woman find her place being an artist, at odds with the dominant scheme of values, and a person curious about others? How can one reconcile the desire for freedom with the need for self-protection? What are the proper paths for due care and attention both for oneself and for others, for the pursuit of happiness and respect for moral obligations?

Finding answers to these questions will put Amel in a position where she has to make choices. The decisions she makes, sometimes on impulse and sometimes after lengthy deliberation, will shape her future. *L'Amour des hommes* is the story of a return to life through the rebirth of desire. By moving on from self-portraiture to taking pictures of young men, Amel stops putting herself before the lens as an object of attention and instead takes over the desiring gaze, as a free woman.

In the end, Amel has to break away from her family. Only by breaking with those she loves can she find her freedom and her place in the world. One can see the end of the film as the start of her life as a free woman: from here on she will be able to live her life on her own terms instead of adhering to dictates she neither really knows nor acknowledges. This young woman, who at the start of the story is apparently liberated and lives her life thinking of herself as such, actually has yet to go through a process of emancipation. A blossoming, one might say, as an artist and as a person.

Director's note

L'Amour des hommes is a cinematic portrait. I want to use the medium of film to deepen my observation of people. The way I do that is through direction centered on the gaze, with long takes that allow the relations between characters to develop. A portrait of a country and a city that have gone through enormous changes in recent years, but where one is still struck, first and foremost, by the persistence of certain social structures and mentalities. A portrait of a middle-class family in the heart of a working-class neighborhood. Above all, a portrait of a woman, an artist, who, moved by a profound inner need, gradually manages to break the taboo of nudity.

Technical information

Fiction · 90'
Digital · Color

Production status

Pre-production

Shooting language

French, Arabic

Shooting start

11/2015

Total budget

1.175.116 Euro

Funds secured

400.000 Euro

Production company

4 A 4 Productions
mani.mortazavi@
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4a4productions.fr
andrea.queralt@
4a4productions.fr



Director
Narimane Mari

Biography

Born in Algiers in 1969, she began her career in Paris, in various communications agencies, where she created cultural content for print and television and contributed to developing art galleries. In 2010, she founded Allers Retours Films. *Loubia Hamra* (2013), her first feature-length film is multiprime. In February 2015, she directed for *Hors Pistes* at the Centre Pompidou: *La vie courante*.

Selected filmography

Prologue (2007)
Loubia Hamra / Bloody Beans (2013)
La Vie courante (2015)

Production company

Allers Retours Films

Profile

Aller Retours Films is committed to producing creative cinematic works about society.

Its editorial line is based on projects by directors and artists taking part in their contemporary history by way of the cinema and visual arts.

Selected filmography

Nous dehors, Bahia Bencheikh El Fegoun (2014)
Algérie état des lieux état d'esprit
Bahia Bencheikh El Fegoun (2015)
L'Abattoir, Hassen Ferhani (2015)

Co-production company

Centrale Electrique



Co-producer
Corinne Castel

Le Fort des fous

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.

They christen the place *Le Fort des fous*.

An extraordinary mix of people, a new population that forms from multiple passages of men and women, domestic and wild animals, carried by endless roads, the salt road, the dreams of a New France, the aims of the Trans-Saharan railroad, and the farthest trades.

They come up from black Africa or descend from Europe; they have traversed the world all the way from Asia. They are officers, nomads, Turks, escaped women, abandoned slaves, and tired merchants. This vast expanse teems with life. Gradually, the fort has become the anchor of an utopian society. One of the residents continuously photographs and collects information on this society moving up until he unwittingly builds a center of knowledge, that the colonialists and the countries having the ambition to rule the commercial routes cruelly miss. In one night the fort will plunge into tragedy.

An irrational vengeance will become the sole reason to live for all the fort's citizens. It will gnaw at their minds. All call, albeit not exclusively, for punishment, be it divine or tactical.

Then events begin to take place that will bring out the worst in what men's despair can hold.

Director's note

In this movie I deal with power and domination as fatal powers. I provide them with an extensive and pristine geographical space: the Saharan Desert. I do so to allow them to move and unfold in all of their dimensions, and express both their rational and irrational violence and ferociousness.

How to tangle the false into the true and materialize the power of collective imagination as the image of our nightmares or our daydreams, our outdated or needed beliefs, our inaccurate memories and the superstitions that continue to frighten or surprise us, while taking into account a History that is no longer very clear.

The story carries these "phenomena", History and the present without distinction, just as our inner self functions if everything decides to play all at once.

Technical information
Fiction · 120' · HD · Color

Production status
In financing

Shooting language
Algerian, Tamasheq, French, English

Shooting start
10/2015

Total budget
810.000 Euro

Funds secured
160.000 Euro

Production company
Allers Retours Films
narimanemari@gmail.com



Director
**Amin
Sidi-Boumediène**

Biography

Amin Sidi-Boumediène was born in 1982. In 2005 he gained a diploma in directing from the CLCF film school in Paris. He went on to work on a number of projects as assistant director. Late in 2010 he made his first short subject, produced by Thala Films, the much-laureled *Demain, Alger?*. That was followed in 2012 by *L'Île*. Amin Sidi-Boumediène is currently working on his first full-length feature.

Selected filmography

Demain, Alger? (2011)
L'Île (2012)
Serial K. (2014)

Production company

Thala Films Production



Producer
Fayçal Hammoum

Profile

Set up in January 2010, Thala Films is a film production company based in the Algerian capital, Algiers. Its ambition is above all to take an active part in promoting and preserving Algerian culture. Thala Films has produced two full-length documentary features to date, as well as six short subjects which have garnered numerous awards at national and international festivals.

Filmography

Demain, Alger?, Amin Sidi-Boumediène (2012)
L'Île, Amin Sidi-Boumediène (2012)
Oued el oued, Abdenour Zahzah (2014)

Le Sacrifié

Algeria, 1994. For two years terrorist attacks have ravaged the north of the country, inflicting their daily toll of death and horror. Samir and Lotfi, friends since childhood, criss-cross the Algerian desert looking for Abou Leila, a dangerous terrorist accused of the savage murder of a well-known lawyer and his police bodyguard. Their search seems absurd, given that the Sahara has not been affected by the wave of murders and bomb attacks sweeping through the rest of the country, but Samir, whose mental health is fragile, is convinced that they have a good lead. Lotfi, on the other hand, has only one priority: he wants to get Samir as far from the capital as he can, realizing that in his current state his friend is too delicate for more bloodshed. Suffering from nightmares and other hallucinations, increasingly terrifying, Samir seems permanently on the brink of collapse, despite Lotfi's constant protecting presence.

As they approach the supposed hideout of Abou Leila, they learn of the mysterious plight of another village not far distant, where several people have been killed in terrible and suspicious circumstances, their throats cut and bodies mutilated. The inhabitants, peaceful Tuareg who have never known horrors of the kind, refuse to accept that such crimes could be the work of a man, believing instead that the killer is a wild beast, perhaps a legendary creature, or one possessed by a jinn, one of the desert spirits that ceaselessly roam the dunes. Samir is sure that Abou Leila is the culprit. Lotfi has no choice but to follow his friend between these two equally absurd notions, and to plunge with him into the implacable cycle of blind violence.

Director's note

I was about ten in 1992, when Islamist terrorism erupted in Algeria. After a decade of violence, it left behind hundreds of thousands of victims. That period is essential to my generation, because it provided the inevitable backdrop for our youth. Through the traumas experienced by a policeman, *Le Sacrifié* tells first and foremost of the traumas undergone by the whole Algerian people. Understanding the psychological basis for that period leads one past the specifics of individual debates to embrace the deep underlying causes of an absurd level of violence, which we experienced at close quarters and which, one way or another, has contaminated us all.

Technical information
Fiction · 120' · Digital HD
Color

Production status
Pre-production

Shooting language
Arabic (Algerian dialect),
French, Tamashaq

Shooting start
10/2017

Total budget
1.700.000 Euro

Funds secured
10.000 Euro

Production company
Thala Films Production
faycalhammoum@gmail.com
bouaziz.yacine@gmail.com



Director
Fyzal Boulifa

Biography

Born in 1985, director Fyzal Boulifa is based between Tangier and London. His short films include *Whore*, selected in over 20 international film festivals and *The Curse* winner of the Prix Illy (Cannes Director's Fortnight), nominated for a BAFTA in the Best Short Film Category and selected at Sundance Film Festival in 2012. *Pagan Magic* will be Fyzal's debut feature film. His last short film *Rate Me* has been selected at the Director's Fortnight in 2015.

Selected filmography

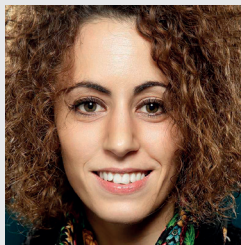
Whore (2009)

The Curse (2012)

Rate Me (2015)

Production company

In Vivo Films



Producer
Louise Bellicaud

Profile

Set up in 2015 in Paris, In Vivo Films aims to support directors and writers from various backgrounds and countries. In Vivo Films develops projects with a strong cultural identity, tackling local subjects that have the potential to reach an international audience. In Vivo Films is currently developing several feature films in international co-production.

Filmography

El Son de Eliecer, Joan Gomez (in development)

Serial, Wim Vanacker (in development)

Pagan Magic

The North of Morocco, 1960s. A time of change and rapid urbanization.

Two women – one practically still a child and one elderly – journey from the mountains, having decided to try their luck in the city.

Hayat (70) is overjoyed to soon find Soussen (14) a job as maid for a rich European furniture dealer.

In fact, Soussen is Hayat's daughter. Having lost her original family in the tumultuous years of war and famine of the Rif, she adopted an orphan. Cut loose in a society where large patriarchal families function as society's safety net, the two women have moved from this village to that, surviving as they can.

But Hayat holds a fierce, contradictory faith – as much inspired by pagan superstitions as by Islam – and regards the city with bitter suspicion. To protect her daughter and only wealth, she uses a host of forbidden magic rituals, spells and hexes, utilizing also more practical methods – such as occasionally inspecting Soussen and dousing her hair in petrol to ward off men.

Soussen is used to these humiliating rituals and understands well: the world is a dangerous place and her mother's love is great.

Yet she must admit the city is a place of wonder; her first close friend, who speaks in French and tells her that magic isn't real and for hillbillies, her first trip to the cinema, a love story. All of it hints at a world that is bigger than Soussen had dared to guess at.

It is when the young son of her employer, Victor, arrives from his travels around North Africa that Soussen finds herself – for the first time – resentful of her mother's exasperating, ugly peasant ways.

Victor is unlike his drunkard father – charming and talkative. He shows Soussen his ethnographic photos – tribal women, veiled woman, mountain women like her. When he asks Soussen if she would pose for him, she is terrified but intoxicated. A tentative relationship begins to develop but stalls.

Frustrated Soussen is sure that Victor is in love with her and soon wonders whether what is standing in her way is the magical "lock" placed upon her and her virginity by her mother. Despite what her friend says, desperate Soussen decides to find a spell to reverse it, in search of a magic that will challenge her mother's directly.

A day later she is caught stealing and raped by her employer. The dark power of magic has proved itself to impressionable Soussen. Unable to reveal what has happened, she believes that Victor's love will be her salvation – and is prepared to once more turn to magic to secure it.

Director's note

What does it mean to live in a secular age? Before, the self was at the mercy of God, ghosts, the elements - but now she is free and growing all the time, supposedly the maker of her own destiny. Yet in colonisation we see that this cannot be true for everyone. Over and over the attempted transition proves jarring, even devastating. To explore this, *Pagan Magic* reworks my mother's early life in Morocco along with pagan superstitions which remain strong there as a dark fable in which magic functions as metaphor for many things: female hierarchical power, burgeoning sexuality, the glittering glamour of the settler and the refuge of the wretched; a kind of resistance.

Technical information

Fiction · 100'
4K · Black & white

Production status

In development

Shooting language

Arabic

Shooting start

12/2016

Total budget

950.000 Euro

Funds secured

45.000 Euro

Production company

In Vivo Films
louise@invivofilms.com



Director
Nejjib Belkadhi

Biography

Belkadhi engaged in commercial and marketing studies before gaining his first experience in television with Canal+ Horizons. His short film *Tsawer*, documentary *VHS-Kahloucha* and his first full-length feature *Bastardo* brought him 17 prizes from around the world. In 2014 he brought out his second full-length documentary *7 ½*, shot three years earlier ahead of the first free elections in Tunisia.

Selected filmography

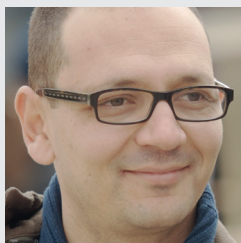
VHS Kahloucha (2006)

Bastardo (2013)

Sept et demi (2014)

Production company

Propaganda Productions



Producer
Imed Marzouk

Profile

Propaganda Productions is a Tunisian film production company set up in 2002 by Imed Marzouk and Néjjib Belkadhi. To date the company has completed numerous projects, including full-length features, documentaries, short subjects (both fiction and animation) and commissioned features, in particular co-productions with France, Qatar and Belgium.

Filmography

VHS Kahloucha, Nejjib Belkadhi (2006)

Bastardo, Nejjib Belkadhi (2013)

Oiseau de nuit, Leyla Bouzid (2014)

Retina

Lotfi, a Tunisian immigrant around 40, is a small-time delinquent who lives in the Noailles neighborhood of Marseilles. His life revolves around his electrical goods store and his French girlfriend Monique.

Lotfi's past catches up with him when his brother calls from Tunisia to tell him that his wife Sarra has had a stroke and been taken to hospital. Lotfi therefore has to return to his homeland to claim custody of his autistic son Amr, 9, from his maternal aunt Khedija.

Living with the child that he hasn't seen for six years, and experiencing his autism at first hand, is the start of a learning curve that leads Lotfi to rediscover his paternal instincts and forge new bonds with his son.

It will be a journey of initiation for Lotfi, faced with the fears and crises of Amr: the child obstinately refuses to acknowledge the presence of a father whom he has never known, failing to register any sign of his existence in his eyes.

It is precisely that complete absence of gaze which will motivate Lotfi in his quest to get through to his child and open up his mind to the world.

Director's note

The idea for this film came from a series of photographs by Timothy Archibald called Echolilia. I was completely knocked out by Archibald's pictures, which feature an autistic boy posing for his father. Exploring the father-son relationship through the specter of autism proved to be a tall order, given that the film I wanted to write had less to do with the syndrome itself than with a man's rapport with his son and his rediscovered role as father.

It's a film about communication, about the denial and acceptance of others. Which is why the gaze is placed at the center of the conflictual relationship between Lotfi and his son, who will be played by an autistic boy. *Retina* is a film I would like to be deep and lightweight at one and the same time; my intention is that it should plunge the viewer into the unfathomable experience of an autistic child.

Technical information

Fiction · 90' · 4K · Color

Production status

Writing & development

Shooting language

Arabic

Shooting start

05/2016

Total budget

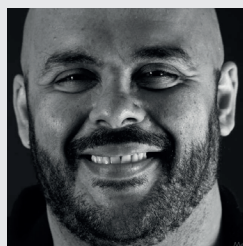
1.163.358 Euro

Funds secured

153.358 Euro

Production company

Propaganda Productions
propaganda@gnet.tn



Director
Yanis Koussim

Biography

Yanis Koussim made his first short fiction feature *Khti* in 2007. It was selected for various festivals, picking up a number of prizes, and was followed by the short *Khouya*, which garnered critical acclaim and further awards at international festivals such as Locarno, Clermont-Ferrand, Amiens...

Koussim lives in Algeria, where he is now editing his first full-length feature *Alger by Night*.

Filmography

Khti (Ma soeur) (2007)

Khouya (Mon frère) (2010)

Un été à Alger : la nuit (2012)

Production company

Mille et Une Productions



Producer
Farès Ladjimi

Profile

Mille et Une Productions has produced some twenty full-length features, including *Nos héros sont morts ce soir (Our Heroes Died Tonight, 2013)* by David Perrault (International Critics' Week at Cannes), *Je veux voir (I Want to See, 2008)* with Catherine Deneuve (Cannes - Un Certain Regard) and *El Premio (The Prize, 2011)* by Paula Markovitch (Silver Bear at the 61st Berlin Film Festival).

Selected filmography

Je veux voir

Joana Hadjithomas, Khalil Joreige (2008)

El Premio, Paula Markovitch (2011)

Nos héros sont morts ce soir

David Perrault (2013)

Ruqya

Algeria, in the nineties...

Slimane is one of the five survivors of the Sidi-Salem massacre, a little farming village lost in the dry high plateau of Eastern Algeria. All of the survivors are amnesiac. Everybody has been identified except for Slimane.

No one knows if he is a persecutor or a victim...

Many years later, Slimane has become a Raqi, an Islamic exorcist. From the rocky plains to the most isolated farms, he roams through the country, going where the demon is, fighting the devil's torments. He spends his days reciting the Koran on the bedside of the possessed and his nights losing himself in alcohol and prostitutes in shady clubs, wasting his entire state pension.

One morning, the man who took Slimane in his house after the massacre and taught him Ruqya's secrets, dies in his sleep...

Some time later, a woman knocks on Slimane's door. She is convinced that her son, an autistic teenager, is possessed...

She slowly gets into the Raqi's life. Soon after, the grave of the old man is desecrated: his spleen has been ripped off. One by one, the Sidi-Salem survivors are murdered and their spleens are also ripped off.

Meanwhile, Slimane fails to exorcise the teenager, and it's becoming more and more difficult for him to practice Ruqyas.

As he is about to give up, Slimane understands that only a final Ruqya can put an end to the neverending horror... The very horror that could help him find out who he really is, the horror that should have ended years ago, in Sidi-Salem.

Director's note

Nightmares we have while sleeping exorcise our deepest fears once we are awaked. For over a century, horror movies took this role on a collective scale. Each era has its own fears, every fear has its outlets movies. "Ruqya" is my nightmare, it is any country's that has experienced a decade of indescribable fear due to Islamic terrorism. The more a nightmare seems real, the better it fulfills its purpose. In terms of both form and content, Ruqya will be as realistic as possible. No grimacing creatures nor repulsive monsters. There will be only human... The worst of demons.

Technical information
Fiction · 90' · 4K · Color

Production status
In development

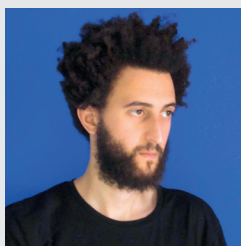
Shooting language
Arabic

Shooting start
08/2016

Total budget
1.520.034 Euro

Funds secured
245.034 Euro

Production company
Mille et Une Productions
milleetune@free.fr



Director
Alaa Eddine Aljem

Biography

Alaa studied film at the ESAVM and INSAS schools in Brussels. His films have been selected for festivals around the world, winning several awards. His most recent short subject, *Les Poissons du désert*, took the critics' screenwriting and grand prizes at the last Moroccan National Film Festival and has been invited to the Short Film Corner at Cannes.

Filmography

Education nationale (2009)
Dernier hommage (2012)
Les Poissons du désert (2015)

Production company

Le Moindre Geste



Producer
Francesca Duca

Profile

Le Moindre Geste aims help young film makers at every stage of the production process. The editorial policy is not to impose any particular line, but instead to be open to the directors' varying sensibilities and to take a proactive interest in the progress of their art. Every film is an opportunity to explore places, people, stories and feelings.

Selected filmography

La Troisième main, Hicham Elladdaqui (2014)
La Route du pain, Hicham Elladdaqui (2015)
Les Poissons du désert, Alaa Eddine Aljem (2015)

Saint inconnu

Amine, a young man of around 20, just pulled off the burglary of a lifetime, from which he came away with a tidy sum of money. Fleeing the scene of the crime with the police hot on his heels, he literally took to the hills. Having managed to shake off his pursuers for the moment, he now comes face to face with the reality of being stuck in the desert with nowhere to go. So he sets off on foot with a bag full of money, climbs to the top of the nearest hill and decides to bury the loot there.

With the squad cars getting closer, he wants to cover up any traces, while at the same time marking out the spot where the money lies hidden. His solution is to disguise the hole as a modest grave, surrounding it with small stones and placing a bigger one where the head would be. On it he writes in chalk, "We belong to God and to him we return". Satisfied, Amine runs down the hill and calmly waits for the police to arrive.

Several years later, having served his sentence, he returns to the place where the money is buried, only to be met with a big surprise: a Marabout, the tomb of a venerated holy man, has been erected on the hilltop. A sign explains that this is the 'Marabout of the unknown saint' – a holy man whose name has been lost, who lived in the area and used to take refuge on the hilltops to contemplate the horizon. People had been searching in vain for his tomb for decades. Now that it has been found, many come to the new Marabout to meditate and pray. A new village has even sprung up below the hillside to cater to the pilgrims and numerous visitors to the site.

Amine takes up residence in the village, still determined to recover the money...

Director's note

I've always wanted to work with the idea of rumor and the way it spreads, I find it fascinating how, in societies like mine, word of mouth can feed rumors and create legends out of nothing. There is something highly filmic in these little white solitary tombs that rise up on the tops of hills or just outside villages. And then the idea that people could erect a tomb to an unknown man, and go on pilgrimages to it with faith and belief, although not knowing whom they honor, is fascinating in itself. In *Saint inconnu* my starting point is an absurd but realistic situation, out of which I develop a story with both dramatic and comic elements.

Technical information
Fiction · 90' · HD · Color

Production status
Writing & development

Shooting language
Arabic

Shooting start
05/2016

Total budget
755.000 Euro

Funds secured
60.000 Euro

Production company
Le Moindre Geste
fra.duca@gmail.com



Director
Khalid Shamis

Biography

Having worked in the film industries of the UK, Middle East and Southern Africa, Khalid runs his production company tubafilms from Cape Town. Khalid has lectured at the WITS University in Johannesburg, holds the South African Guild of Editors acronym and has acquired numerous awards for his work. His feature length documentary, *Imam and I*, was received to critical acclaim.

Selected filmography

The Killing of the Imam (2010)
Imam and I (2011)

Production company

Big World Cinema



Producer
Steven Markovitz

Profile

Big World Cinema has produced many award-winning features and documentaries including *Stories of Our Lives* (Berlinale Teddy Jury Award 2015), *Beats of the Antonov* (Winner TIFF Documentary Audience Award, 2014), *Viva Riva!* (Toronto, Berlin) and *Congo in Four Acts* (Berlin, IDFA, Hotdocs). They have an extensive production and distribution network across Africa.

Selected filmography

Viva Riva!, Djo Munga (2010)
Stories of Our Lives, Jim Chuchu (2014)
Beats of the Antonov, Hajooj Kuka (2014)

Co-production company

tubafilms

The Colonel's Stray Dogs

My father was one of Gadaffi's "stray dogs". For over 30 years he was hunted and vilified as he and a number of fellow exiled Libyans formed the major opposition in exile, the National Front for the Salvation of Libya, in 1981. As support for the Front grew, they gathered arms, worked with the CIA and MI6, attempted coups and dedicated the next 30 years to Gadaffi's downfall. Whilst my father and his friends plotted from an office in a leafy suburb of South London, I, as a young boy, was totally unaware that all our lives were at risk.

When Gadaffi finally fell in 2011, the remaining Front members rushed to take up major positions in the new government, intent on being there to build the new Libya. But what soon emerged, as it rapidly descended into chaos, was a country traumatized by 40 years of dictatorship and untrusting of the new government and the newly returned Front. Revolution-borne militias now fight amongst themselves for power as a conflicted government depends on them to restore peace whilst keeping them on the payroll. Kidnapping is rife, foreign embassies and aid agencies fast pull out their envoys as civil war and fragmentation is promised. Corruption, outside interests, extremists and vast tracts of oil make for a complex political landscape whose future hangs in the balance.

Today's Libya is not the one that my father dreamt of, and out of the nightmare emerges unprecedented access to a political thriller and a personal story of secrets and sacrifice.

Director's note

The Colonel's Stray Dogs explores Libya's present, future and past through the eyes of some of those in charge and under threat. This is not a personal journey of myself as the filmmaker, although my father is one of the characters and Libya has always been a place that I have had very little access to as a child of exile. Rather, it is an accounting of history, which will inform us of the present and future states of a country in flux; and due to the access I have to these characters, and the circumstances that Libya and myself now find ourselves in, it is an obligation. I seek to uncover a hidden history and a complex present that will inform global opinion on Libya.

Technical information
Documentary · 72'
Digital · Color

Production status
In production

Shooting language
Arabic, English

Shooting start
05/2015

Total budget
260.957 Euro

Funds secured
73.372 Euro

Production company
Big World Cinema
steven@bigworld.co.za



Open Doors 8-11 | 8 | 2015

Friday 7th August

Open Doors Welcome Drink
by invitation only

Saturday 8th August

Ateliers (Open Doors Club)

Sunday 9th August

One-to-one meetings (Open Doors Club)

Monday 10th August

One-to-one meetings (Open Doors Club)

Tuesday 11th August

Open Doors Award Ceremony
(Spazio Cinema, Forum)

Organized for the Festival audience, the Open Doors Screenings – a non-competitive section – presents a selection of films characteristic of the cinematographic and cultural universe of Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

For more information: opendoors.pardo.ch

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