



FEST
2024

New Directors
New Films Festival

24.06
— 01.07

ESPINHO, PORTUGAL

www.fest.pt

— Book of
Projects

Schedule

28 JUN — FRIDAY

09:30 – 18:00

CHECK-IN | 09:30 – 10:00

FEATURE GEMS | 10:00 – 11:00

+ The Age Of Anger: Or How Professor Lekr Saved And Subsequently Destroyed Humanity

Alexander Maffei | 10:00 - 10:10

+ Panna Sofia / Comenius

Václav Kadrnka | 10:10 - 10:20

+ Wolfing

Maggie Ryan | 10:20 - 10:30

+ Winter Flowers

Isabella Fusco | 10:30 - 10:40

+ Solo

Maria João Mayer | 10:40 - 10:50

+ The River Before The Curve

Renan Barbosa Brandão | 10:50 - 11:00

Coffeekick | 11:00 – 11:30

FEATURE GEMS | 11:30 – 11:50

+ Dreaming Differences

Nataša Jurčová Fíndrová | 11:30 – 11:40

+ Saffron

Anouar Moatassim | 11:40 – 11:50

WORK IN PROGRESS | 11:50 – 12:00

+ Al Baseer - The Blind Ferryman

Ali Al-Fatlawi | 11:50 - 12:00

+ The Activist

Romas Zabarauskas | 12:00 - 12:10

+ In Corman's Territory

Mário Patrocínio | 12:10 - 12:20

+ When Night Falls

Simona Cella | 12:20 - 12:30

One-on-One Meetings | 15:00 – 18:00

29 JUN — SATURDAY

09:30 – 19:30

CHECK-IN | 09:30 – 10:00

SERIES | 10:00 – 11:00

+ A21

Mathilde Hauducœur | 10:00 - 10:10

+ Unclean

Francesca Tasini | 10:10 - 10:20

+ Social

Themis Gkyrtis | 10:20 - 10:30

+ Smile Shine Repeat

Diogo Figueira | 10:30 - 10:40

+ Odeceixe United

Vasco Viana | 10:40 - 10:50

+ Kreuzberg Brothers Detective Office

Hasan Karademir | 10:50 - 11:00

Coffeekick | 11:00 – 11:30

MAKE IT SHORT | 11:30 – 12:40

+ My father has three shadows

Gabriela Clar | 11:30 - 11:40

+ Dead Angles

Jan Amor | 11:40 - 11:50

+ Moonlike

Francesco Lorusso | 11:50 - 12:00

+ Untitled Vacation Project

Jacob LaMendola | 12:00 - 12:10

+ The Fishwife

Alexandra Allen | 12:10 - 12:20

+ Clinic

Penelope Mavropsaridi | 12:20 - 12:30

+ Say Cheese

Vera Filenko | 12:30 - 12:40

One-on-One Meetings | 15:00 – 18:00

Networking Cocktail | 18:00 – 19:30

Editorial

 **FEST —
New Directors
New Films Festival**
24 JUN - 01 JUL 2024

We're delighted to welcome you to FEST-Pitching Forum 2024. Throughout its eleven-year history, this event has proven to be an outstanding and rewarding opportunity, creating bridges between the most creative filmmakers and top industry experts

About the event

FEST - Pitching Forum is an international film project competition, that provides development support and co-production opportunities. Open to work-in-progress projects of different lengths, genres, and stages of development. Since last year the categories also include Series.

Awards

At the end of the presentations, the best-pitched projects will receive these awards:

- Feature Gems: Bleat Post-Production Award and Music & Cinema Marseille's Market for Film Music Composition Award
- Work in Progress: O Monge Post-production Award and FEST Film Lab Award
- Make it Short: Bleat Post-Production Award and Distribution Award promoted by Mailuki Films
- Series: Halo Post-Production Award and FEST Film Lab Award

The awards will be announced immediately after the jury reaches a decision. After the announcement, each finalist will have the opportunity to partake in an exclusive individual meeting with all the experts, for private feedback and counseling about their project.

BILHETES / TICKETS

Por sessão / Per session: **4,5€**
Estudantes / Students, +65: **4€**
FESTinha: **Entrada Livre / Free Entry**

ACREDITAÇÕES / BADGES

FEST CINEMA & MUSIC: **30€**
FEST TALENT: **100€**
FEST PRO: **130€**

FEST.PT

[@festfilmfestival](https://www.festfilmfestival.pt)
[#thisisfest](https://www.festfilmfestival.pt)
Contactos / Contacts
fest@fest.pt
+351 227 327 545





Projects —
Feature Gems



The Age Of Anger: Or How Professor Lekr Saved And Subsequently Destroyed Humanity

In a not-so-dystopian future, the world finds itself on the brink of widespread energetic collapse. Everything seems to be lost. Until a new energy source is discovered: human anger.



Production Details

Country: Brazil, Italy

Stage of production: Pre-Production

Expected Runtime: 90 min

Genre: Black Comedy, Comedy, Mockumentary, Sci-Fi

Languages: Portuguese, German

Estimated budget: 3000000

Supporting Institutions: N/A

Director & Writer: Ricardo Mendonça de França

Producers: Nicola Allieta; Lorenzo Seritti

■ Ricardo Mendonça de França

Director and writer
ricardowsmf@gmail.com

■ Alexander Maffei

Associate Producer
alex@mov.limited

■ Claudia Stecher

Junior Producer
claudiastecher1@gmail.com

Synopsis ■ After decades of ceaseless conflicts and cataclysms, the world teeters on the edge of an unprecedented collapse, brought to its knees by a monumental energy crisis. Yet, in an unexpected turn of events, at the twenty-sixth global congress of the Commission for the Research of New Forms of Energy, Professor Möritz Lekr makes his entrance. With the flair of a modern-day alchemist, he unveils a revolutionary method to harness the volatile power of human ire as a renewable energy source. The ensuing societal metamorphosis necessary to make it work, however, promises to unravel in layers of complexity and controversy, challenging our very existential fabric in ways previously unimagined.

THE AGE OF ANGER: Or How Professor Lekr Saved And Subsequently Destroyed Humanity is divided into five chapters that follow and illustrate the chaotic, hysterical, and destructive process of the pioneering implementation of Professor Lekr's method in Brazilian lands.

The film is divided into 5 chapters:

Chapter 1.

THE STATE OF THINGS

Chapter 2.

PROFESSOR LEKR AND THE TWENTY-SIXTH COPENOFE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS IN RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

CHAPTER 03.

THE BRAZILIAN EXPERIMENT

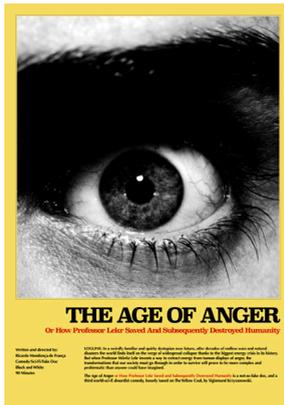
CHAPTER 04.

NO HATE, NO FOOD

CHAPTER 05.

THE PROFESSOR AND I

About the Author ■ Ricardo Mendonça de França is a young Brazilian filmmaker, part of Projeto Paradiso's talent network. Originating from a working-class family, his academic journey in Cinema started at Universidade Federal Fluminense and then, thanks to a federal grant,



continued at Vassar College and the prestigious Tisch School of the Arts at New York University. He later established “Zooyoey”, a boutique production company with a mission to craft short films that poignantly capture the everyday dramas of Brazilian life, where he acted as both director and DOP.

Since 2014, Mendonça de França has also worked as a director at Rede Globo, Brazil's premier television network. His directorial portfolio includes the telenovela “Orphans of a Nation,” a narrative centered around Syrian refugees in Brazil that won the International Emmy Awards, the Rose D'or award, and the Grand Prix at the Seoul Drama Awards. Other notable works include the series “Justice Misconduct” and the telenovela “Renascença.”

“Bestiary,” his debut feature film, clinched the “New Original Scripts” competition in 2020, an initiative by the Organization of Ibero-American States, the Institute of Brazilian Audiovisual Content (ICAB), and the Audiovisual Secretariat. It was also chosen for the 2021 Script Revision Lab of the Cine Qua Non Lab in Mexico and is currently in pre-production.

“The Age of Anger, or How Professor Lekr Saved and

Subsequently Destroyed Humanity” stands as his ambitious second feature film project.

Note of Intent ■ The Age of Anger is a (not so) fake documentary and an absurd science fiction comedy, loosely based on “The Yellow Coal” by Sigmund Krzyzanowski. Echoing the 1950s newsreels, which were produced worldwide but perfected in Brazil by Jean Manzon, the idea is for each chapter will employ the distinctive features of this genre to narrate this tragedy disguised as a potential salvation of humanity. With an omniscient narrator and an orchestrated soundtrack, the film will blend archive footage from the '50s and '60s with staged futuristic scenarios in a narrative amalgam. This approach aims to forge a visual future that merges distinct decades, portraying an unspecified, chaotic era born from the tragic stagnation of the human condition amidst rapid technological advancements. Drawing inspiration from films like Werner Herzog's “Beyond the Infinite Blue” and Kleber Mendonça Filho's “Cold Tropic,” The Age of Anger aspires to shine a new light on the realm of science fiction. Flourishing from an era of extreme polarization and moral, social, psychological, and political effervescence, it represents a deconstruction, a mockery, a jest — critiquing not only our current existential landscape but also the politics embedded within the architecture of classic cinematic genres.

It is a documentary that fabricates truth, a comedy that inflicts pain, and a piece of skeptical fantasy. Above all, it's an ode to human stupidity. ■



Panna Sofia / Comenius

It is winter, 1627. Europe is in the midst of religious wars. A young pastor Jan Amos Comenius and his community are in despair, facing exile, death, or conversion. He is called to examine a sick girl who claims she has strange visions. The images and words she offers may be a new path to hope. Based on a true story.

Production Details

Country: Czech Republic

Stage of production: Script Development

Expected Runtime: 80 pages

Genre: Fiction

Languages: Czech

Estimated budget: 1 680 000

Supporting Institutions: Produced by Sirius Films, Co-produced by Silverart, Talweg, Supported by Czech Film Fund development and production, Distributor Cinemart Czech Republic and Slovakia

Director & Writer: Václav Kadrnka; Lenka Horňáková Cívade; Václav Kadrnka

Producers: Václav Kadrnka; Simona Kadrnková



■ Václav Kadrnka

Director, producer
info@vaclavkadrnka.com

■ Simona Kadrnková

Producer
kadrnkova@email.cz

Synopsis ■ It is winter 1627, Europe is in the middle of religious wars. A young Protestant priest Jan Amos Comenius hides with his family from persecution. They face two ultimate choices, either they convert to the Catholic religion, or they leave their homeland for good. Jan Amos is invited to visit a sick girl who claims to see strange images and hears voices. He is expected to provide explanations. He is in doubt not only about the truthfulness of the girl's visions; he is undergoing a crisis of faith. He resists the feeling that responsibility for one sick girl means responsibility for something much more profound. Little by little, Jan Amos finds a way through to the girl, and her visions become a support for his attitudes. The question is no longer whether they are true but how to deal with the images conveyed, how to interpret them. Martinus, a Lutheran priest brings news from the battlefields. A discussion ensues between him and Jan Amos. What seemed elusive is suddenly crystal clear to Jan Amos. He opposes Martinus' realistic position and denounces the endless repetition of wars which are promoted by the perpetuation of fear and restriction of knowledge. Kristina dies, but her awakening to a new life transcends the contradictions of this world, a way to attain wisdom. The exile is imminent.

About the Author ■ Václav Kadrnka (born in 1973) is a FAMU graduate. His feature film debut "Eighty Letters" was premiered at the Berlinale Forum in 2011. This reconstruction of a single day in communist Czechoslovakia as experienced by a fourteen-year-old boy was screened at numerous world festivals and received several awards. He won the Czech Film Critics Award. His second film "Little Crusader", an adaptation of a medieval poem by Jaroslav Vrchlicky premiered at Karlovy Vary IFF and won the Grand Prix Crystal Globe and

other international awards. His third film "Saving One Who Was Dead" premiered in the main competition at IFF Karlovy Vary 2021 and won Best director Award at IFF GOA India. Václav Kadrnka teaches film language at FAMU, Prague.

Previous works: Saving One Who Was Dead (2021) - World premiere - Karlovy Vary International Film Festival 2021; Little Crusader (2017) - World premiere - Karlovy Vary International Film Festival - Competition | Grand Prix - Crystal Globe, Karlovy Vary International Film Festival 2017; Eighty Letters (2011) - World premiere - Berlinale Forum 2011, Silver Alexander, the Grand Jury Award - Thessaloniki International Film Festival 2011 and FIPRESCI Award - Thessaloniki International Film Festival 2011

Note of Intent ■ Comenius: The film is based on the true story and derives from the works and life of Jan Amos Comenius (1592–1670), who Comenius is considered the father of modern education. But much more than that, he was a philosopher and a spiritual leader who foresaw the abysmal contradictions in the modern dualistic worldview. In his vision, everything that divides the world by force and violence can be transformed into a project which unveils the infinite loving presence and creativity. This vision was profoundly associated in Comenius's mind with an endeavour to achieve peace in Europe and even to improve relationships with other religions. Now more than ever, at a time of political, ecological and religious crises, Comenius' pansophical thoughts and spiritual endeavour once again become relevant.

Director's statement ■ I believe we are still surrounded by images of war because we put faith in them. The theme of Panna Sophia is what images do we believe and why? Comenius believed

in revelatory nature of images. For him visions always precede rational understanding. They are instantaneous, and only after they appear we ascribe meanings to them. In trying to grasp them, we are losing them at the same time. That is why images have such a power and dominate the world today. They are immediate. In my film rational images meet revelations. Visions of resurrections against objective images of war and conflict. In Comenius these images meet and clash. I find it intriguing to capture the despair of a young man on a spiritual mission caused by the images around him, and his new, perhaps foolish hope, which he pins on an "ordinary, sickly" girl. Their relationship is the core of the film. They both get trapped in a given situation and limited space. Kristina between the real world and the world of her visions. Comenius halfway between home and exile. Surrounded by dramatic circumstances they are looking for the way home. A visual poem on the brink of apocalypse. ■



Wolfin

Faoladh is a Gaelic werewolf drama set in Donegal's Irish-speaking region about a curious kid in the dark about her heritage who comes to reckon with her inner power as she unpacks her family's myths.

Production Details

Country: Ireland

Stage of production: Script Development

Expected Runtime: 90 min

Genre: Drama, Genre, Horror, Psychological Drama, Supernatural

Languages: Irish / Gaelic

Estimated budget: '2.6

Supporting Institutions: It has been developed as a half-hour film with the support of the Irish-language TG4 & Screen Ireland with Creature Design by Odyssey Studios supported by the National Talent Academy's Director's Lab.

Director & Writer: Daniel Butler; Mike Heneghan

Producer: Maggie Ryan



■ **Maggie Ryan**

Producer

maggie@escapepodmedia.ie

Synopsis - Nancy (9) lives on a remote sheep farm in the Donegal Gaeltacht with her ailing grandfather Fergus (60s) and frequently-absent mother Bridget (30s) whom she idolises. She resists calls to go school and instead wants to be 'wild' like her enigmatic mother. As our story begins, rough February storms are causing worried sheep to lamb early and Nancy suffers restless dreams where she and her mother hunt sheep together.

When a pregnant ewe is savaged along with its unborn lamb, Nancy fears its connection to her dream and her grandfather's tale of The She-Wolves of Cruachán. Disturbed by the thought that she might be killing lambs, she sets out to save a dog being blamed for her 'badness'.

Despite her grandfather's concern and a neighbour's violent threats Nancy attempts to overcome feelings of powerlessness to prevent more pain and death. Her quest leads her to reckon with long held family secrets and strange forces within her as she begins to unravel her family's myths and the truth of violent fairy wolf-women.

As the story unfolds we come to suspect that Bridget is dead. We go from seeing her as a woman idealised by her daughter, who may or may not be a werewolf, to viewing her appearances as wishful fantasy and learn the harsh reality Fergus's folktales hide. The film's finale forces our belief to return as Nancy gains control of her 'wolfing' and we realise Bridget as an otherworldly 'spirit-guide' as Nancy integrates the reality of her death with the truth of her powers.

About the Author - Daniel is an Irish-speaking writer and director from the Donegal Gaeltacht who has won awards for his work in both Irish and English.



These include the LUMI award at the Belfast Film Festival for the RTÉ funded Leave The Road Behind You and 'Best New Director' at the Kinsale Shark Awards for music videos for Irish-language rappers KNEECAP.

He co-wrote and directed the Irish-language short film Bean Feasa, inspired by Donegal folktales, which premiered at LA's Screamfest before winning 'Best Irish Short Film' at the Foyle Film Festival, qualifying it for the Academy Awards®.

Most recently he was nominated for a Discovery Award at the Dublin International Film Festival and shortlisted for TG4's 'Céim Eile' TV Drama scheme with the Gaelic werewolf drama Faoladh.

Note of Intent - Faoladh can be described as Beasts of the Southern Wild (2012) meets Border (2018) by way of Wolfwalkers (2020), combining grounded magic realism with authentic Gaelic wolf-lore.

Its tone is influenced by magic realist films such Spirit of the Beehive (1973) and Raise Ravens (1976), the latter being an allegorical look at Franco's Spain explored through a child's imaginings of her deceased mother.

As an Irish-speaker with a life-long love of folklore and mythology I am drawn to using myths to explore our culture's present-day challenges and this is a story about a character struggling to overcome grief and navigate loss while grappling with the complexity of her heritage.

In this sense, this film is an allegorical film about our relationship to both our language and to our landscape as well as the inherited trauma we are forced to navigate as we grow in awareness of the world around us.

Growing up in a family scarred by war the myth of The She-Wolves of Cruachán had a powerful resonance to me. My mother is one of 12 children and my granny being shot by a British soldier left an indelible mark on all of us raised in the shadow of violence that only becomes clear in later life.

This is a story of how a one-time idol can become a complex role model and a child can come to see a parent as someone needing to be cared for too. This is ultimately a journey of self-love and self-confidence and of discovering the richness of our heritage, amidst the pain and strife. ■



Winter Flowers

Sensitive eight-year-old Alma and her family travel to her grandmother's village after she passes. When her aunt tells an ancient folktale, Alma gets caught up between reality and fantasy.

Production Details

Country: Portugal

Stage of production: Script Development

Expected Runtime: 80 min

Genre: Drama, Magical realism / folklore

Languages: Portuguese

Estimated budget: 1700000

Supporting Institutions: N/A

Director & Writer: Isabella Fusco;

Bruno Pinheiro Melim



■ Isabella Fusco

Writer, co-director

isabella.rbfusco@gmail.com

■ Bruno Pinheiro Melim

Co-director

bpmelim@gmail.com

Synopsis ■ Alma is a sensitive eight-year-old who lives in Lisbon with her mother and younger brother. Her cherished grandmother, Rosa, is ill and temporarily living with them in the capital. When she dies, Alma and her family travel to her grandmother's village in the North of Portugal.

After the funeral at Rosa's home, Alma's mother talks to her sister and agrees to stay a little longer in order to help repair the house and put it up for sale.

One night, Alma's aunt tells the tale of the Black Ox, an ancient folktale of the region, and the deeply imaginative girl is captivated by its mystery. In the story, the magical animal enters the village every last day of winter to seek out the spirits of the dead and take them to the darkness of the nearby forest. The villagers also celebrate this day with a festivity, representing the beginning of a new cycle.

Alma is deeply fascinated by the tale and recklessly undertakes a search for this mythical figure, while still processing the death of her grandma, a subject her mother avoids to talk about.

When a real black ox escapes from the nearby slaughterhouse, Tomás, Alma's cousin who works there, is injured. The village's men hunt down the animal, but it seems mysteriously undiscoverable.

During her own secret search for the magical creature, which Alma turns into her mission, she questions the limits of life and death, getting caught up between reality and fantasy.

When the last day of winter arrives Alma has an encounter inside the forest.

About the Author ■ Isabella Fusco and Bruno Pinheiro Melim are a duo of film

directors. They both graduated in Social Communications with a Qualification in Film at Armando Álvares Penteado Foundation (FAAP) in São Paulo, Brazil, later moving to Portugal and pursuing the Master program in Film Project Development at the Lisbon Theatre and Film School, where they specialized in Film Narratives and each of them developed a fiction feature film script.

Isabella is an Italian Brazilian screenwriter, director and film journalist. She worked as an assistant director to Brazilian director Fernando Grostein Andrade (Abe and Wondering Heart), has experience as an assistant director and script supervisor in many short-films, as well as directed Bloom, a fiction short film selected to the Guadalajara International Film Festival's library. She currently lives in Lisbon and works as a film journalist.

Bruno is a Portuguese Brazilian director. He worked at the production company Bossa Nova Films, where he developed his main projects in conjunction with MAM – Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo. He directed Egg, a short film shot in 16mm that was shown at festivals, as well as an award-winning music video. As a video editor, Bruno has experience with documentaries, fiction, teasers, music videos, interviews, sports and advertising. He is also a screenwriter and writes about film on his website Cultura Caché, and Cine Series. Currently, his new film titled Pivete is in the post-production phase.

Note of Intent ■ Winter Flowers was born from the desire to approach the relation we have with the Mystery and the cycles of life and death from a child's point of view. This impulse was heightened by the loss of my own three grandparents in the space of a year.

Alma being an eight-year-old makes the children's magical thinking accessible. Perhaps the child's spirit is in fact more connected to 'the time before birth', the mystery before life. The project also explores how mythical thinking and folktales can guide us through these universal human questions. The tale of the Black Ox was created to externalize Alma's internal conflicts and call her to action. Roaming both worlds, the living and the dead, it holds the secret of the life-death-life cycle.

Hopefully, Winter Flowers is a project that touches on universal and timeless matters in a sensitive and both narratively and visually interesting ways. In a very linear and rational world, it proposes an entertaining and compelling story that reconnects to this cyclicity.

Víctor Erice's *The Spirit of the Beehive* is a precious work to regard as it approaches a child's look towards existential questions with such sensibility, and is capable of poetically converging reality and fantasy. Carla Simón's *Summer 1993* is a reference to the tone of the family interactions and how the camera patiently follows the child's struggles. Ingmar Bergman's *Fanny & Alexander* evokes a haunting and yet magical atmosphere that is of interest to the project. ■



Solo

A middle aged man reconnects with his dysfunctional family when he opens the door of his small flat to his estranged son and the father who once rejected him.

Production Details

Country: Portugal

Stage of production: Pre-Production

Expected Runtime: 90 min

Genre: Drama

Languages: Portuguese

Estimated budget: 800000

Supporting Institutions: ICA and RTP

Director & Writer: Sebastião Salgado;

Diogo Figueira

Producers: Maria João Mayer



■ Maria João Mayer

Producer

maria.joao@mariaemayer.com



■ Sebastião Salgado

Director

sebastiaosalgado@gmail.com

Synopsis ■ Rodrigo is a male sex worker who lives in peace with his solitude, between fleeting relationships with his clients. But everything changes when he takes in Rafa, his teenage son and saxophonist, who comes to Lisbon with the aim of being admitted to a prestigious jazz school.

Rodrigo disguises past mistakes and wounds and Rafa hides a secret, which Rodrigo soon finds out: Rafa got a girl pregnant in his hometown of Guimarães and he is unwilling to take responsibility.

As if that wasn't enough, a few days later Rodrigo is forced to take in his father João, a sick pianist who disinherited him and now needs shelter after carelessly setting fire to the house where he used to live.

As Rafa prepares a major saxophone solo for an audition with the help of João, who sees his grandson as a way of escaping death, Rodrigo tries to act as the father he never was. But Rafa builds a wall around him, and Rodrigo feels left out. Unable to communicate with his father and son, he feels a stranger in his own home.

Rodrigo goes through a succession of relationships - with customers and with his best friend - looking for a real connection, a kind of redemption. Now aware of the unhappiness that is settling into the solitude he always cherished.

But when João is rushed to the hospital, distraught, Rodrigo and Rafa have an unlikely yet cathartic jam session that brings them together for the first time. And when the audition arrives, Rodrigo picks his father at the hospital and takes him to see Rafa, who passes the test.

Everything seems perfect: Rodrigo won his son's affection and Rafa now contemplates a future alongside his father and

grandfather; but Rodrigo feels compelled to act. Rafa is going to be a father whether he likes it or not.

Rodrigo gives him the time and space to decide - either to do the right thing; or to stay in Lisbon, now that they can be father and son. Next morning when he wakes up, Rodrigo is alone again. With a piece of happiness.

About the Author ■ Sebastião Salgado was born in Lisbon in 1982. He graduated in Law and worked in a Law firm for four years before he decided to follow his passion for film. In 2011 he went to New York to study screenwriting at NYFA, and since returning to Lisbon he started working in a writer's room for TV series for Portuguese broadcasters. But cinema has always been his passion, so in 2016 Sebastião enrolled in a master's degree at the Lisbon Film and Theatre School (ESTC), and since then he has directed three short films - "Já Passou" (2016), "Segunda-Feira" (2018) and "Cuidado" (2020) -, as well as a six-episodes television series - "Madrugada Suja" (2024). As a screenwriter, besides several TV Shows and short films, he also co-wrote the feature film "Ballad of a Hustler" (2024), directed by Heitor Dhalia, which premiered at this year's Festival do Rio, and was recently exhibited in Mostra de São Paulo and Santa Barbara International Film Festival. Sebastião is a "LIM - Less is More" and "ESP - European Short Pitch" alumnus, and "Solo" is his first feature film as a director.

Note of Intent ■ I believe the purest form of love is found in the bond that links parents and children. Obviously, blood ties are not enough, and what we most see these days are children orphaned by living parents, but I believe we must cherish this bond. Even if we do not necessarily share the same value systems, we must take care of 'our

own' or we will be permanently out of balance.

Based on this premise, Solo follows the emotional journey of Rodrigo, a middle-aged prostitute who grew up motherless and without the affection of his father, and who reproduces the patterns he acquired onto his son. The film depicts a summer which Rodrigo, his son Rafa and his father João are forced to spend together after years of estrangement. Three men who have always been told by patriarchy that 'caring' is not part of their role as human beings.

Aesthetically, the human body is a central piece of my film and I intend to show it in its multiple dimensions. The body can be beautiful and grotesque, a source of pleasure and pain, and I will explore it through these three characters: a grandfather whose body is a cage; a middle-aged father whose body is a tool for survival; and a teenager who is just forging his own identity.

The tone will vary between lighter, sunnier movements and others that are tenser and darker, ending on a touching note when Rodrigo, the protagonist, finally learns that what he needs is not what he wanted in the first place. ■



The River Before The Curve

A hybrid documentary film brings together three workers murdered in the 1988 strike in Volta Redonda (Brazil), revisits the city in ruins today and restores the culture of the local native peoples.

Production Details

Country: Brazil

Stage of production: Script Development

Expected Runtime: 80 mins

Genre: Documentary, Historical, Human Rights, Political, Religious / Spiritual

Languages: Portuguese

Estimated budget: 543121

Supporting Institutions: SECEC - RJ - Secretaria de Cultura e Economia Criativa / Rio de Janeiro City Department of Culture - Riofilme <https://riofilme.com.br> / Rio Film Commission (<https://www.rioilmcommission.com>) / Department of Culture of the city of Volta Redonda / Barra Mansa Culture Foundation / Embaúba Filmes (one of the main distributors of Brazilian independent cinema)

Director & Writer: Renan Barbosa Brandão

Producers: Sílvia Sobral; Renan Barbosa Brandão



■ Renan Barbosa Brandão

Director, Screenwriter and Producer
brandao.renan@gmail.com



■ Sílvia Sobral

Producer
silsdn@gmail.com

Synopsis ■ Friends and factory workers William, Valmir and Barroso claimed better working conditions during the 1988 strike in the city of Volta Redonda. They were brutally murdered by the Brazilian Army in the largest strike in the history of the popular and working movement in the state of Rio de Janeiro.

Through a documental language with fictional production and archive footage, the film allows these friends to meet again 35 years after their deaths to revisit the city, its neighborhoods and monuments. This way, the historical past of the city's growth (which begins with the steel mill construction in a originally indigenous territory) is investigated, as well as the labor movements in the 1980s.

During this journey that takes place in the present days, they find a paradoxical city, in ruins, and with high rates of pollution in the quality of the air, which brutally affects the health of its dwellers who breathe steel dust found in the city's space, especially those who live in the Conforto neighborhood, which is located facing the factory's chimneys. Meaning "comfort", the real neighborhood in the city with a contradictory name will also be portrayed in the film by showing the daily lives of those who live in it.

With the affectionate encounter among the three workers and the indigenous people who inhabited that territory, they rescue the culture of the Fluminense native peoples, the Puris and the Coroados, creating the possibility of a more dignified city for its inhabitants.

About the Author ■ Renan Brandão was born in Volta Redonda, a city in the interior of the state of Rio de Janeiro. Director and Screenwriter with a graduation in Cinema in Rio de Janeiro. Is a founding partner of the production company baráúna,

which has been in existence for 10 years and whose films have been shown at important festivals such as the Rotterdam International Film Festival.

Renan has scripted and directed six short films, with notable mention to "Last Sunday" (Fiction, 4k, 2022) based on "The Gospel According to Jesus Christ" by Nobel Prize-winning Portuguese writer José Saramago, this film has garnered 33 awards, and more than 80 selections at festivals such as the 63rd Cartagena de Indias International Film Festival (FICCI).

Additionally, Renan created "Tears of Ogum" (Fiction, 35mm, 2009), His work "I Never Should Have Returned" (Fiction, 35mm, 2012) received awards for Best Direction, Best Actor, and Best Original Soundtrack at the 45th Brasília Festival of Brazilian Cinema in 2012. Furthermore, "At the End of the Conversation, They Say Goodbye with an Embrace" (Fiction, 2k, 2018) was selected for over 60 national and international festivals, including the Competitive Show of the 40th Havana Film Festival, where earned 18 awards at festivals.

He is Assistant Director in the feature film "Death Inhabits at Night" (International Film Festival Rotterdam). Also, Renan was Assistant Director in dozens of features such as "Elite Squad 2" and dozens of TV series.

Note of Intent ■ "The River Before The Curve" reflects the desire of Brazilian director Renan Barbosa Brandão to investigate, with originality and relevance, the birth of his hometown (a small steel mill city in Brazil's countryside), starting from the history of the Brazilian labor movement history and rescuing popular struggles with black and indigenous protagonists who will be approached with dignity.

The environmental issue it's

urgent and the problem regarding the air pollution with steel residues that come from the factory is also one of the project's topic lines. The people who live in the city suffer from terrible respiratory complications because of the black steel dust in their homes and, consequently, in their lungs.

The hybrid format, through its contemporary language, makes use of varied resources in filmmaking to produce a work with a narrative foundation from the historical facts, rupturing with the classic grammar through these resources that intensify the topics addressed.

The hybrid filmmaking of Brazilian filmmaker, Adirley Queirós, is a reference: a filmmaker who makes use of the memory and the imagination to understand the future of a certain territory and who also uses tragic events of the past as a foundation.

A fundamental influence in the dramatics and directing point of view is the director Apichatpong Weerasethakul, where the supernatural, nature, ancestry and the industrialized society live together in an integrated way with a lot of ingenuity. ■



Dreaming Differences

In a world where sleep can be permanently removed, Petr gives up his dreams to fulfill the capitalist dreams of success. But then he meets Ema, for whom dreams provide an escape from everyday reality.

Production Details

Country: Slovakia, Czechia

Stage of production: Script Development

Expected Runtime: 90 min

Genre: Drama, Romance, Sci-Fi, Surreal

Languages: Czech, Slovak

Estimated budget: 1100000

Supporting Institutions: n/a

Director & Writer: Kateřina Hroníková;

Kristína Žilinčárová

Producers: Nataša Jurčová Findrová;

Kateřina Hroníková



■ Nataša Jurčová Findrová

Producer

njf@murmurfilms.sk

■ Kateřina Hroníková

Director

katerinahronikova@gmail.com

Synopsis - The film *Dreaming Differences* is set in a near-future society where one can undergo a procedure called Rouse to permanently remove one's need to sleep. Without sleep, the days are seamlessly blending together, and it becomes difficult to keep track of time. Companies take advantage of this new technology, requiring longer working hours, the entertainment industry is booming, and everyday life speeds up.

Petr (50), who has been working as a post office manager for many years, is about to lose his job. Disoriented by the hyper-technologized world, he undergoes the Rouse procedure, hoping it could improve his chances in finding work. Then he starts seeing Ema (45) who isn't willing to give up sleep – escaping into dreams shelters her from everyday reality.

Difficult work schedules, obligations towards family members, and mutual dishonesty challenge their relationship right from the start. Petr discovers that being awake all the time also means that he never gets any rest from his problems, with his new job being more of a distraction from his life than a dream. Ema, on the other hand, literally follows her dreams, and returns to a special place she used to visit with her husband, hoping to finally come to terms with his death.

The film examines society's demand for constant productivity, and the damage it inflicts upon our intimate relationships. In *Dreaming Differences*, endlessly increasing performance leads to the total colonisation of nights – the time intended for rest.

About the Director - Kateřina Hroníková (25) was born in Prague. Her previous work consists of short films, ranging from documentary and experimental films to fictional

narratives that have been screened at various European film festivals. Her film *Extraction* (2019) was premiered in the Fascination: Exprmntl.cz section at the Ji.hlava IDFF and received a Jury honorable mention at the Cortex Film Festival. Her short film *Rheum* (2021) premiered at Karlovy Vary IFF, where it was part of Future Frames and subsequently screened at San Sebastian IFF and Warsaw IFF. Film *Rheum* has won 8 student film awards and was also shortlisted for the Yugo BAFTA Student Awards. She is currently completing her short film *Shedding the Mist* (2024) and preparing her feature debut *Dreaming Differences*.

About the Producer - Nataša Jurčová Findrová has a fresh Master's degree in Film Production and Distribution and Bachelor's degree in Documentary Film Directing from Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava. Her previous background is in acting and performance. She is the Executive Producer for several feature documentary films and currently she is working on her first production debut under her company 'Murmur Films'. In addition, she works as PR & Production manager for film festivals (Slovak Queer Film Festival, IFF Febiofest, IFF Cinematik) and works for Lumière Cinema in Bratislava.

Note of Intent - In a capitalist society, sleep is often treated as an unpleasant necessity that we have to go through in order to be productive again the next day. Many people struggle with sleep deprivation because it is impossible to work full-time, spend quality time with loved ones, do the chores, eat well, and get enough sleep – we can't do all of this in a day. And when we do make time for our loved ones, we often fail to emotionally connect with them due to exhaustion from work. So I thought about how to portray this imaginary

triangle between sleep, work and relationships. I'd like to point out that the problem lies in how active and alert we need to be at all times, rather than in our bodily needs.

Dreaming Differences can be categorized as sci-fi, but focuses on the characters, not the technology. It's a film that takes an existing social phenomenon and drives it to the point of absurdity to show how alarming some of current social problems are. The goal of the film is to show the constant push for productivity, agitation, and restlessness. It should also question the empty promise of a good life under capitalism, where rest is always postponed for later – but later never comes. The concept for this fictional near-future world began with a simple idea: What if I never had to go to sleep again? Sleep would stop compartmentalizing my life, and I would have a sense of continuity until the day I died. ■



Saffron

Houria, a teenager linked to the cultivation of saffron in the Anti-Atlas mountains, becomes a symbol of resistance against the oppression and violence against young girls in her village, plunging into a world where the border between imagination and reality collapses, leading to tragic consequences and a fierce struggle for justice and equality.

Production Details

Country: Morocco

Stage of production: Script Development

Expected Runtime: 100 minutes

Genre: Drama, Genre, Human Rights, Political

Languages: Amazigh (Berber) and arab

Estimated budget: 255200

Supporting Institutions: Moroccan

Cinematography Center

Director & Writer: Anouar Moatassim

Producer: Aicha Abbouzied



■ Anouar Moatassim

Director and Scriptwriter

anouarmoatassim@gmail.com

■ Aicha Abbouzied Kraus

Producer

Chacha@casablancapictures.com

Synopsis - In the heart of the majestic Anti-Atlas mountains, nestled in the peaceful village of Taliouine at an altitude of over 1586 meters, lives Houria, a 14-year-old teenager. Like every year, from late October to early November, Houria, her friends, and the women of the village harvest saffron. They pick the delicate crocus flower early in the morning, just before sunrise, before its warmth wilts the delicate, almost phosphorescent purple petals. They pinch the saffron stigma between their fingers and cut it with their thumbnail. Houria's radiant smile attests to her profound connection with the fragile beauty of this mountainous land. As she rests among the crocuses, she gazes at the bright blue sky, a window to infinity. Houria holds a secret: the ability to weave imaginary worlds in her mind, where dreams merge with reality. It is in one of these universes that she takes us, where she marries Ahmed, a young man of her age, in a ceremony imbued with joy and love. The scene of their wedding is a visual and emotional feast, blending ancient traditions and fairy tale elements. However, in this enchanted world, tragedy strikes the village. The crocus flowers are attacked and die one after the other, unable to produce saffron. Presumed work of the Forest Monster. Simultaneously, the village's young girls, Houria's friends, no longer participate in the harvest, mysteriously withdrawing into themselves, shutting themselves off one by one at home. Houria tries to understand the situation. An investigation by Houria reveals a connection between the crocus flowers and the well-being of these young girls, as if there were a sensory connection between the girls and the flowers, capturing their emotions and thoughts. To put an end to these troubles, she must confront the forest monster, protected by law and enjoying impunity despite the damage to the crocus flowers. Her natural charisma and contagious courage

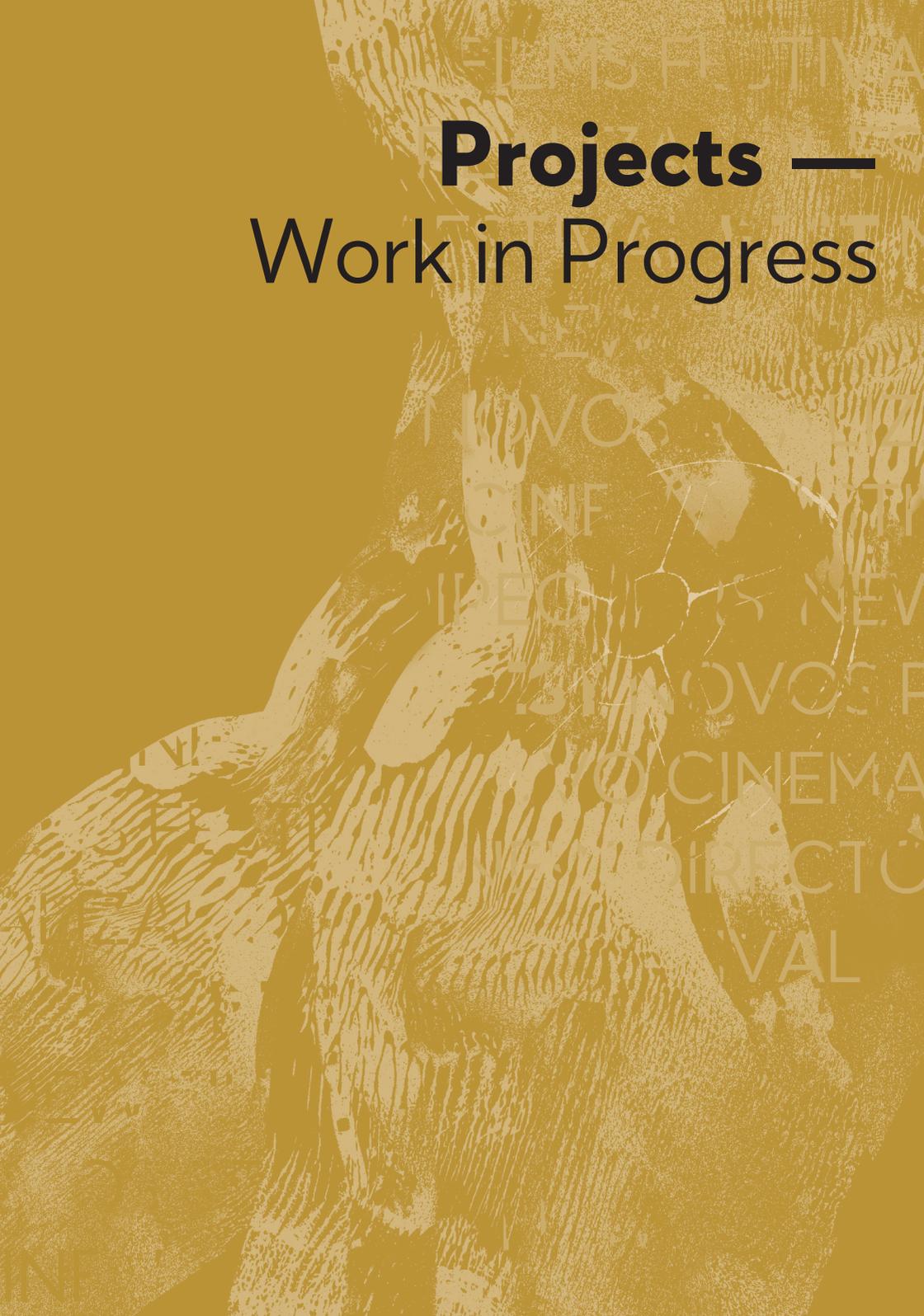
awaken dormant consciences, free the voices of oppressed women, and raise awareness among men about the importance of mutual respect. Houria's struggle transcends borders. Her campaign to abolish a law protecting the forest monster propels her to the status of a national and international figure. Through protests and passionate speeches, she mobilizes the masses, inspires change, and conquers hearts. However, as the story unfolds, cracks appear in this idyllic world. Strange and mysterious elements raise doubts in Houria's mind. Lost objects, enigmatic encounters... Is it real, or is it an escape for Houria, a way to flee the harsh reality?

About the Author - Anouar Moatassim is a Belgian artist of Moroccan origin. From the age of 13, he ventured into rap, using his lyrics to denounce injustices. Early on, he expressed himself through various disciplines such as drawing and photography. His concerts, where he shares his claims infused with a touch of Moroccan identity, attract crowds who recognize his identity shaped by his cultural heritage. In the midst of his musical ascent, marked by a collaboration with Soprano, the violent murder of his two cousins deeply affected him. Abandoning music, he turned to photography and cinema, even earning a degree in the latter field. Convinced that cinema offers a more universal and accessible platform to make his voice heard, Anouar Moatassim gained recognition through his photo shoot «BRUT» featuring Maurice Béjart's dancers, as well as his first short film dedicated to the rapper Soprano. Since then, he has directed various commercials, including one for «The Fight Against Cancer»; selected at the Dubai Lynx International Festival. He has also helmed several successful series such as «The 1001 Nights», «The Green March», «#CODE», and «REZO», exploring various genres and themes, from science fiction to fantasy to

historical series. His work has been recognized with several awards, including the prestigious GOLD at the African Cristal Awards. Today, Anouar Moatassim has realized his talent with the direction of his first feature film, «ATOMAN», slated for release in late 2024. This film stars the very first Moroccan/African superhero, portrayed by the renowned rapper Lartiste, with Samy Naciri and Sarah Perles in the lead roles. Throughout his career, Anouar Moatassim has established himself in the Moroccan film industry by innovating and pushing the boundaries of cinema. His work is a true tribute to his culture and heritage while addressing universal themes.

Note of Intent - We are about to embark on a cinematic journey with «SAFFRON.» My goal is to create a visually emotional and rich work that captures the essence of life while exploring deep themes. In «SAFFRON,» we will delve into a universe where reality and imagination blend harmoniously. Through the character of Houria, we will explore the mystical connection between girls and crocus flowers. When these flowers fade, it is a sign that the girls have experienced violence, revealing a powerful symbolic dimension. The culprit will be represented by the forest monster, a mysterious entity protected by a law that seems to defy human justice. This representation will allow us to address themes of social responsibility and the fight against injustice. In essence, «SAFFRON» will be much more than a simple film; it will be a profound exploration of the most intimate aspects of the human condition, while highlighting the challenges we face in our quest for justice and redemption. ■





Projects — Work in Progress



Al Baseer - The Blind Ferryman

Production Details

Country: Switzerland, Iraq, Qatar

Stage of production: In Editing / Post-Production

Expected Runtime: 100-120 minutes

Genre: Drama, Romance, Fantasy

Languages: Arabic

Estimated budget: 2090121

Supporting Institutions: MEDIA Development Funding, Federal Office of Culture Development, Federal Office of Culture Production, BAK Succès Cinéma, Canton of Zurich Development, Canton of Zurich Production, Succès Zürich Producer, Canton of St. Gallen Development, SRG Pacte Coproduction Investment, Swiss Films Support Atelier Cannes, Suissimage automatic funding, Société Suisse des Auteurs Treatment Award, AFAC Development Support, Red Sea Fund Development Support, Malmö Arab Film Festival Development Fund, Doha Film Fund Development Fund, CineGouna In Kind Post Production, Focal Stage, Ministry of Culture Iraq In Kind Housing & Storage, Baghdad Film Fund Production Fund

Director & Writer: Ali Al-Fatlawi; Joël Jent

Producers: Samir Jamal Aldin

The blind ferryman Ayoub lives in the endless Iraqi Marshes. One night he falls in love with a mysterious woman. But no one believes that she is real, so he has to prove that his love exists.



■ Ali Al-Fatlawi

Autor, Director, producer
ali@urakypost.com

Synopsis - Ayoub, a blind ferryman, navigates the southern Iraqi marshes with remarkable skill, earning his livelihood by ferrying passengers and goods. Despite his lack of sight, Ayoub moves through the marshes with an innate sense of direction. Evenings find him in the company of friends, sharing drinks and engaging in deep conversations about life's mysteries.

One night, their gathering is violently interrupted by a group of radicals. In the ensuing chaos, Ayoub, for the first time in his life, loses his way. His life takes an unexpected turn when he is rescued by a mysterious woman. This encounter shakes the foundations of his existence. Mesmerized by her, Ayoub begins to center his life around their meetings.

As Ayoub becomes more enthralled by the enigmatic woman, his stories about her are met with disbelief. Whispers and rumors circulate, suggesting that he has lost his sanity. Even his closest friends begin to doubt him, creating a rift in their relationships. Isolated and beset by self-doubt, Ayoub struggles to distinguish between reality and imagination, questioning the very nature of his existence. This inner turmoil drives him to the edge, as he seeks to understand whether the woman who saved him is a figment of his imagination or a transformative force in his life.

About the Author - Ali was born in Baghdad. His beginnings were in painting and poetry. At a young age, he became a member of the Iraqi Writers' Union. He entered the Art Institute to study art, but the political situation forced him to leave his homeland. After a long odyssey, he came to Switzerland in '97 and had his bachelor's degree from the F&F Art School in Zürich in 2002. He has written and produced several short films and has been working as a picture designer since 2007

until he founded Urakypost Film Company in 2013. He is a member of the Swiss Fiction movement and a member of Suissimage for writers in Switzerland. In addition to his film work, Ali has been active in the visual arts for twenty years, specializing in performance art and traveling with his art around the world. He also gave Manny workshops in performance art, such as Boston University of the Arts, Royal London College of Art, Ireland, Germany, and Switzerland, and received many awards, the most important once are, the prestigious Swiss Art Award in 2012, and the Swiss Award for Performing Arts 2011. Filmography (Selection): Al Baseer - The Blind Ferryman, feature, by Ali Al-Fatlawi (2024); Eating the Silence, short film by Joël Jent and Ali Al-Fatlawi (2021); Baghdad in My Shadow, Fiction, by Samir (1st AD, Casting, DIT) (2019); Iraqi Odyssey, Documentary, by Samir (Editor) (2014); Survivor of Firdos Square, Documentary, by Adel Khaled (Producer) (2014).

Note of Intent - Through my family who lived on the banks of the marshes in the twenties of the last century, and through the stories of my parents, I learned about the sources of knowledge, civilization and legends situated in the marshes early on. And through my two blind aunts I learned how important it is to see with our hearts. So, I thought if we were all blind there would be no wars because we could not shoot each other. That is where the story of Al Baseer started. The blindman who travels through the marshes and knows them reed by reed.

The crux of THE BLIND FERRYMAN is the Creative implementation of the (inside view) of the blind protagonist. The difficult process of capturing the thoughts of a protagonist is enhanced by the additional challenge that our main character begins to blur reality and imagination.

I consider the deviation from classic storytelling a creative challenge since the narrative force in this film can only be achieved through a subjective glance at its characters and their personalities. It requires a careful observation through extraordinary pictures of the people in the archaic swamp landscape.

Even if many scenes are characterized by a documentary observation of the actions, perception shall be heightened by creating a certain rhythm so the film can be transferred into the genre of the fable. ■



The Activist

A young man infiltrates a radical neo-Nazi group to find the killer of his LGBTQ+ activist boyfriend.

Production Details

Country: Lithuania

Stage of production: In Editing / Post-Production

Expected Runtime: 95 min

Genre: LGBTQ+, Neo-noir, Thriller

Languages: Lithuanian

Estimated budget: 536300

Supporting Institutions: Lithuanian Film Center; Lithuanian National Television and Radio; Bushwick Film Institute

Director & Writer: Romas Zabarauskas; Marc David Jacobs; Vitalija Lapina

Producers: Romas Zabarauskas; Glenn Elliott; Gabriele Miseviciute



■ Romas Zabarauskas

Director

Producer - romas@zabarauskas.lt

Synopsis ■ Andrius, a young print worker, questions his boyfriend Deividas' activism and fears the looming threat of neo-Nazis. When he returns home one evening to discover Deividas murdered, Andrius is devastated. Disheartened by society's apathy and the police's inaction, he embarks on a quest to find the killer himself.

Andrius seeks help from Rainbow Kaunas, the organization Deividas led, but the activists are reluctant, fearing damage to their reputation. Two members offer their support: wealthy gay activist Bernardas and empathetic trans activist Jonas. While Bernardas attempts to hack into Deividas' smartphone for clues, Jonas helps Andrius toughen up to infiltrate the suspected neo-Nazi group.

Throughout the dangerous journey, Andrius discovers the true meaning of activism, acknowledging the values of his late boyfriend. As Andrius delves deeper, he uncovers a web of unexpected intrigue. Faced with a moral dilemma, will Andrius dare to stand up for what's right, risking his safety further?

About the Author ■ Romas Zabarauskas established himself as a provocative Baltic storyteller with a politically engaging and visually lush body of work. Zabarauskas holds a BA in film (2009-2012) from Saint-Denis University (Paris) with an exchange year at Hunter College (New York), and an MA in communication (2014-2016) from KSU (Vilnius). Romas is based in Vilnius with his fiancé Kornelius.

Zabarauskas' previous feature *THE WRITER* (2023) debuted at the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival, Baltic Film Competition. An English-language romantic drama shares the story of Russian-Lithuanian and Lithuanian-American former lovers reconnecting in New York, decades after serving in the Soviet army

together. Its French premiere is set for November 2024 at Chéries-Chéris, Paris LGBTQI & +++ Film Festival, followed by a special program of Lithuanian queer films in the context of the Lithuanian Season in France.

THE LAWYER (2020), the first Lithuanian feature film focusing on a male same-sex romantic relationship and one of the few fiction films about the LGBTQ+ refugee experience in Europe, was sold to 8 international distributors and dubbed in French as well as Portuguese. The film has been screened at 33 film festivals including BFI Flare: London LGBTQIA+ Film Festival, Kyiv International Film Festival Molodist, and International Film Festival of India. Among them, it was showcased in 7 opening, centerpiece, and closing ceremonies.

Note of Intent ■ Current events remind us – the path of progress is complicated. Societal divisiveness, corrupt politicians and organizations, growing nationalism, and its stunning allies – these complex trends are recognized all over the world. Disappointed as a citizen, I am inspired as an artist: the heated context is full of drama, packed with unexpected twists, ethical nuances, and moral dilemmas. I want to address these complexities in a provocative, noir-coded thriller.

The Activist celebrates the courage of civic society – despite all the challenges, the brave “activists” can make liberal democracy work. Looking for the killer of his activist boyfriend Deividas, Andrius becomes an “activist” himself, understanding the importance of advocacy. I'm thrilled to pack our film with a diverse representation of LGBT+ characters, beyond any clichés: from the good and heroic to indifferent and evil.

While *The Activist* is informed by the film noir's key visuals

– chiaroscuro, complex mise-en-scènes, and chilling urban panoramas – we aim to create a unique style. The green color reigns, representing the duality of human nature. Costumes, production design, and lighting ensure the boldness of colors. The noir atmosphere is highlighted by chamber jazz. Such a heightened style can help to accept the story as a universal drama, detached from a precise locality. ■



In Corman's Territory

Cannibalized Dreams: The Untold Story
of Raúl Ruiz's 'The Territory' and Wim
Wenders' 'The State Of Things'



Production Details

Country: Portugal

Stage of production: In Editing / Post-Production

Expected Runtime: 105 min

Genre: Documentary

Languages: English

Estimated budget: 500000

Supporting Institutions: Pitch Me! - Portuguese
Film Academy Selected Project 2019; Script and
Development Support ICA 2020; Production
Support ICA 2021

Director & Writer: João Monteiro; David França Mendes

Producer: Mário Patrocínio

■ **Mário Patrocínio**

Producer

mario@brocinema.com

Synopsis ■ Sintra, 1981. Raúl Ruiz, Chilean director now residing in France, is shooting a film called “The Territory” supposedly produced by legendary Roger Corman. As the production runs into financial troubles, Wim Wenders arrives in Sintra with the necessary film reels to finalize Ruiz’s project. Fresh out of a traumatic experience with Francis Ford Coppola in Hollywood, Wenders then puts forward the idea of making another film using Ruiz’s cast and crew. The other film would be “The State Of Things” and went on to win the Venice Film Festival the following year. Was “The Territory”, a film about cannibalism, cannibalized? For forty years the secret connection between these two films remained hidden from history. A tale that isn’t short in elements of mystery and intrigue, and laden with artistic influences and many international legendary filmmakers.

About the Author ■ João Monteiro has been a director and programmer at MotelX - International Horror Film Festival since its foundation in 2007. He worked as a Publicist between 2003 and 2008 at CLAP Filmes. He made the film “In the Interstitials of Reality or the Cinema of António de Macedo”, which won the Sophia Award for Best Documentary in 2018, was the closing film at DocLisboa and selected for festivals such as Sitges International Film Festival, Marfeci Buenos Aires, Festival of Luso-Brazilian Cinema Santa Maria da Feira, Funchal Film Fest, Cine-Atlântico Ilha Terceira, distributed in Portugal by Nitrato Filmes and broadcasted twice at RTP. In 2019, he organized a debate for the 21st EUROPA CINEMAS NETWORK conference, and in the same year, he was selected with his project “In Corman’s Territory?” within the scope of script funding and support from both the Portuguese Film Institute and the Portuguese Film Academy.

Note of Intent ■ When João Monteiro came into a rich collection of images belonging to Donald Ranvaud (deceased in 2016) where the producer had documented the Sintra shoots in 16mm, super-8, photos, audio recordings, and various printed materials, the possibility of telling this story was suddenly made real. With our documentary “In Corman’s Territory” we aim to bring this story to all audiences, including those people unfamiliar with the filmmakers portrayed, while at the same time we engage and entertain cinema fans. “In Corman’s Territory” is the title of the documentary Ranvaud did not get to make and it hinges on the fact that Corman’s presence in the story is akin to a God Ex Machina. By adding a “B Movie” meta language layer into a semi-fictional plot, we thread a story that connects all the relevant facts and related characters in this story. This makes sense for a few reasons: the controversy around notorious “b-movie” producer Roger Corman and his actual participation in Raul Ruiz’s production; the fact that Ruiz was a renowned auteur filmmaker but had taken on the unlikely task of directing a cannibalism exploitation commercial film with “The Territory”; the film within a film in Wenders’ “The State of things” is called “The Survivors” and portrays the “remake” of a Corman B-movie; ...and the coincidences do not end here. ■



When Night Falls

In search of their origins Marème (25), Khady (15), Meye (16), Fama (17), Sofia Aicha (12) leave from a suburb of Milan for an initiatory road trip through a Senegal inflamed by protests.

Production Details

Country: Italy

Stage of production: In Editing / Post-Production

Expected Runtime: 70 min

Genre: Documentary, Independent

Languages: Italian/Wolof/French

Estimated budget: 125.440

Supporting Institutions: Associazione Assaman

Director & Writer: Greta Cavalierem; Simona Cella

Producers: Greta Cavaliere; Simona Cella



■ Simona Cella

Director & Producer

simona.reichmann@gmail.com

■ Greta Cavaliere

Director & Producer

gretailiacavaliere@gmail.com

Synopsis ■ Marème (25), Fama (17) Khady (16), Meye (16) and Sofia Aicha (12) live with their families on the southern outskirts of Milan. They are bound by a strong friendship and they shared the typical contradictions of Senegalese second generations crushed between religious and social obligations and the aspiration for freedom. Eager to discover Senegal they imagine a journey that it comes true in the summer of 2023. The girls find themselves protagonists of an on the road that day after day become an initiatory journey through an emotional and symbolic cartography of the country. The itinerary changes constantly, the girls revolve around sprawling families, magnets that attract and repel, forcing the group to divide, reunite, get lost in a country crossed by violent protests caused by the arrest of Oumar Sonko, main opponent of the President Macky Sall. The narrator of the journey is Ramatou, an imaginary rab (female spirit linked to the ancestral culture of the Lebu) that will intertwine five family stories of exile and resilience with the destiny of a people in balance between revolution and dictatorship.

About the Author ■ The film is the first project of the Keur Gou Mak collective born in Milan by a group of girls of Senegalese origin eager to sew together the fragments and blurry memories of their multiple identities through artistic projects. Simona and Greta, independent filmmakers join the collective which thus becomes a common place for reflection and learning, where they can discuss the concept of female identity. Simona Cella, graduated in Film History after a long experience in film production (development and international co-production) she dedicated to develop projects of independent artists and filmmakers from Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Senegal. She is the

coauthor of screenplays (Devil comes to Koko by A. Nze, Still Here by S. Katugampala) and film critic. For Harmattan she edited with Cinzia Quadrati the essay Djibril Diop Mambéty or the journey of the hyena with a preface by Martin Scorsese. Greta Ilia Cavaliere is photographer and videomaker. Graduated in Philosophy and Publishing between Milan and Paris, after a period of artistic residency abroad, she studied and worked at the Italian Institute of Photography. In 2020 her first short film Au Bonheur des Dames was presented at the Venti Rosa Festival during MilanoPhoto Festival and at Salerno Film Festival.

Note of Intent ■ The shooting did not follow a pre-established script. The camera lens filtered a continuous flow of emotions, words, images, memories, desires, creating an intimate relationship with the space and with the group, adapting to the emotions of the moment and even the capricious requests of the girls. The exclusive use of the 50 mm focal length, allows the viewer to experience a feeling of commonality with what he observes and arises from the desire to undermine and desacralize preconceptions and to give space to a new possibility of knowledge. The collective decided to entrust the narration of the journey to an imaginary, feminine spirit, Ramatou, linked to the ancestral cult of the rab, strongly present in contemporary Senegalese society. Ramatou, free the girls from the weight of an autobiographical story that would clash with taboos and prohibitions, observes, comments and listens to the voices that girls encounter during the journey, giving life to a free and irreverent polyphony that is not afraid to touch on themes such as the Black Proud, racism, polygamy, forced emigration and the serious political and social crisis where the body of a young woman finds itself in the middle of a clash between two men fighting for power. ■





FILMS FESTIVAL
FESTIVAL
NEW
NOVOS
CINE
ECONOMIS NEV
NOVOS P
O CINEMA
DIRECTO
VAL

Projects — Series



A21

As an act of personal revenge, best friends Rose and Ines steal Marie Antoinette's slipper, igniting a national revolution.



Production Details

Country: France

Stage of production: Script Development

Expected Runtime: N/A

Genre: Comedy, Drama, LGBTQ+, Thriller, Youth/Teenager

Languages: French

Estimated budget: 900000

Supporting Institutions: N/A

Writers: Mathilde Hauducoeur;

Ana Perromat; Tomás Pinzón Lucena

Producer: Mathilde Hauducoeur

■ **Mathilde Hauducoeur**
Writer and Producer
mathildehauducoeur@gmail.com

■ **Tomás Pinzón Lucena**
Writer
tpinzonlucena@gmail.com

■ **Ana Perromat**
Writer and Producer
anaperromat@gmail.com

Synopsis ■ In a post-pandemic Paris, a group of defiant youth inadvertently forges the A21, a guerrilla movement. Unaware of its potential to reshape France's History, their aim is to take revenge on the patriarchal system. How? Through a series of artstico-military operations that shock the world, they emerge as the most creative fighters for democracy. From 2021 to 2027, the A21 will orchestrate its most audacious operations like stealing Marie Antoinette's slipper or 5800 weapons from Napoleon's tomb. Inspired by feminist, revolutionaries, this guerrilla not only reshapes France forever but also leaves behind a legacy of experiences to confront the New Cold War.

The narrative weaves the fervent passions of youth where love and pain intertwine with politics and warfare. This guerilla is composed of a group of young artists, teenagers, students, but also workers, all outsiders from diverse walks of life. Its protagonists, now legendary figures, reside in the collective consciousness as heroes to some and villains to others: INES FAVALLI (26) infuses audacity and joy into her comrades with her rebellious humor; MATHIEU SANTORI (23) is the visionary who defies conventions to outmaneuver political norms; and ROSE LÉVY (18) alias "PP" (Parisian Princess) the youngest commander and first-hand witness, militant, and chronicler of one of History's most subversive guerrillas. Their revolution takes a sudden turn when they lose their first comrade, and poetry turns into warfare.

About the Author ■ Mathilde Hauducoeur (producer and writer) is a French-American writer, director and producer based between Paris and New York. She holds an MFA in screenwriting and directing from Columbia University, where she currently teaches screenwriting in the undergraduate program. Before her MFA, she worked as

a producers' assistant to Tonya Lewis Lee at ToniK Productions. For the past 5 years, she has been working as an assistant director and has recently founded her own production company, ELLE WOODS FILMS along with Ana Perromat.

Ana Perromat (producer and writer) is a French-Basque screenwriter, director and producer now based in Paris, France. Before her MFA in screenwriting and directing at Columbia, Ana worked in International Films Sales for 5 years. First, as an assistant at MK2 where they represented the films of Dolan, Assayas, Kawase or Zhangke. And then, as Head of Sales at Wide, an international sales company representing films such as *This is Not A Film* by Panahi or *The Student* by Kirill Serebrennikov.

Tomas Pinzon Lucena (writer), born in 1991 in Bogotá, studied film direction in Paris. His documentary "La Paz" won awards in Lima and Cartagena. He also directed "Lupita y las Sirenas" focusing on Caribbean sex workers. After completing his MFA at Columbia, he's developing "The Recyclers" and works with Evidencia Films in Bogota.

Note of Intent ■ It was 2018 when we fell in love at film school. We met, we dreamed, and here we are reunited six years later to conspire. We are as different as the characters we created, yet they all deeply resonate with what unites us: a crazy love for cinema and the desire to burn down the system. We present to you "A21": think Spring Breakers meets Big Little Lies meets Le Bureau des Légendes. As filmmakers, we consider our team's gaze to be distinguished by our ability to observe marginalized realities through a sensitive, respectful but subversive lens. Having collaborated as a trio for many years, we are aware of the narrative risks and challenges we take in constructing stories from

underrepresented perspectives, especially when addressing a guerilla story in a world in crisis. We aim to reach universal audiences, with protagonists we consider to be today's most powerful social agents for change: teenage girls and young artists. We firmly believe that this project has a significant international reach. Our French-American-Colombian perspective creates an unexpected molotov cocktail to tackle provocative themes through disruptive storytelling. With Elle Woods Films as lead producers, we seek to design sustainable production models that are sensitive to the stories and their new formats. We believe that this pitch forum will give us the opportunity to find allies who share our vision and help us to successfully carry out this project. ■



Unclean

A bulimic girl. The desperate unemployed.
 A global internet conspiracy.
 Not *just* The Social Dilemma.

Production Details

Country: German
Stage of production: Script development
Expected Runtime: 55'
Genre: Thriller, dark comedy
Languages: English; other languages
Estimated budget: 1300000
Supporting Institutions: n/a
Writer: Francesca Tasini
Producers: Alberto Rull - Vertice 360; Anthony Alleyne - Bornwild Production; Jalessa Jones; 3 Raum Produktionen



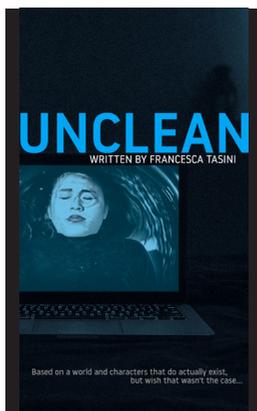
■ **Francesca Tasini**
 Creator and writer
 fratasini@gmail.com



■ **Ian Anderson**
 Music Supervisor
 iwanderson@mac.com

Synopsis - Alone in a new city and desperate for money, reformed hacker Penelope Ruiz becomes a Web Cleaner at the world's biggest social media company, Friends Connect. She and her new colleagues spend their waking lives cleaning the internet of child abuse, assault, murder, terrorism... all unknowingly deep in a trap laid by executive Andrew Brown, who selected each of them for their own unique trauma, and who has hijacked the Web Cleaning programme for his own secret Project: a Project to explore how Artificial Intelligence and trauma can manipulate and control. As Andrew's Project grows, he manages to implant a false memory into Penelope's mind: a memory of her murdering her lover — Friends Connect therapist and Andrew's secret Project partner, Martin Harris. Andrew blackmails Penelope into working for him. He now controls not just Penelope, but also her extraordinary coding and hacking skills, which he plans to use to manipulate and control the world.

About the Author - I am Francesca Tasini, an Italian actor and screenwriter based in Berlin. I am creative, determined and passionate, and I love to work both alone and in a team. I have a multi-disciplinary background, which includes producing, physical theatre, clowning, acting, and stand up comedy. Alongside my native Italian, I speak fluent English, German, and French; I feel like I stretch beyond borders. I have a lot of ideas, and if I could sell them in a supermarket I might be rich by now. But this is just an imaginary world. Alongside my creative work, I freelance in education as an acting and screenwriting coach, theatre pedagog, director and casting assistant. After graduating in Educational Sciences at the University of Bologna, I continued my studies in theatre and physical theatre, circus, and performing art. I have worked as an actress and performer on many varied



projects in both film and theatre. As a writer, I am dark and courageous. I love to collaborate with others, and I am a true believer in female power. In 2020 I directed my first short movie *Lola*, an LGBTQ+ short film which was selected for more than 20 festivals around the world, and broadcast by Weshort and Shorts TV. In 2022 I was selected to develop my series *UNCLEAN* with the prestigious female Screenwriter Lab Europe, supported by Meryl Streep and Nicole Kidman, which fights sexism and ageism in TV and Film. In 2023, *UNCLEAN* won best pilot at the Filmarket Hub Awards.

Note of Intent - SHIT! I was a Web Cleaner. I worked for a very well known social network. I helped clean the internet, like you would clean your house. Except on the web there is filth that you cannot even imagine. It's as if you threw a party but the *Game of Thrones* Red Wedding came instead. Child abuse, assault, prostitution, murder, terrorism... horror no person should ever have to see. But the Web Cleaners see. And I saw. The longer I worked there, the more I realised that there is a dark story that must be told about this clandestine industry. And as an insider, I am the perfect person to tell it. *UNCLEAN* is a thriller with dark

comedy and drama elements. It will hold the same political intrigue and intensity of the series *Industry*, and the same darkly comedic tone of *The End of the F**king World*. It will disorientate and fuel our wildest conspiracies like *Mr. Robot*, and we will confront trauma head-on in a freaky, funny way. Social media and the tech industry are constantly in the news, often embroiled in scandals about how they use our data to manipulate us, both individually and as societies. With the added rise of Artificial Intelligence it is more vital than ever that this story needs to be told.

UNCLEAN is aimed in particular at an adult audience, but also at the younger generation who live their lives online. Our protagonist Penelope Ruiz will be our beacon of hope in this dark underworld; at first unaware, but gradually losing her innocence. Will she succumb to its darkness? ■



Followers on Instagram: 500.000
Humans on Earth: 1

Social

A successful content creator wakes up to a sunny day in an idyllic Lisbon, full of beautiful landscapes, delicious-looking dishes ready to be photographed... and absolutely no humans. Or so he thinks.

Production Details

Country: Portugal

Stage of production: Script Development

Expected Runtime: 25 pages

Genre: Fiction

Languages: English

Estimated budget: No estimated budget at the moment

Supporting Institutions: No supporting institutions attached to the project at the moment

Writer: Themis Gkyrtis



■ Themis Gkyrtis

Creator | Writer

themisgkyrtis@gmail.com

Synopsis - Youtuber, streamer, influencer, brand ambassador... Lucky 7 (aka Fausto) is all of the above, but first and foremost... he is a creator. After all, he created his own channel 7 years ago and ended up now, at the age of 30, having hundreds of thousands of views, YouTube's silver Play Button and a relationship with an equally successful food vlogger. The only thing missing from his life so he can achieve absolute happiness is... 500K followers. And on a regular summer day, when he receives this long-awaited 500.000th follow and goes out to film his celebratory video, something weird is happening... The sun is shining, everything is bathed in a warm, golden light... but there is not a living soul in sight. Nobody is walking in the streets, nobody answers their phones, nobody uploads stories... And Fausto is left alone wondering "Why is nobody online?" Of course, this will be the least of his problems, because he will soon meet the only 3 other people left on the planet: a maniacally devoted follower, an antisocial nerd and a middle-aged hater who wishes that Fausto died. Along with them, he will try to find the answers to all the mysteries of this oddly empty world. How is everything lifeless, but still ready to be photographed? When did the days start getting alarmingly longer? Who is that girl with the angelic smile that keeps up appearing in front of him? And most importantly... Why did he end up in this instagrammable utopia... and how will he escape from this nightmare?

About the Author - Born and raised in the southeast corner of Europe, in Athens, Greece, and currently living in the opposite corner, in Lisbon, Portugal. Since he was young, he discovered his love for writing stories, but as a typical nerd, he studied Foreign Languages, Translation and Linguistics at the National University of Athens. Fortunately, he soon realised his mistake and returned to his first love, the

cinema. In 2007, he started his career as an assistant director in the Greek film industry, working mostly in feature films until 2015. In 2017, he got his first job as a writer in Greece's longest (and still running) sitcom for the Alpha TV network. After three and a half long seasons, 200 episodes and an imminent writer's block, he moved on to his next project. He created and wrote "On all fours", a provocative modern dramedy about a disabled woman and the challenges she faces living on a wheelchair. The series was produced and distributed by ANTI TV network. In April 2023, the series was presented at MipTV at Cannes and was the only non-English-language series to be showcased at "The Wit's Fresh TV Fiction" presentation.

Note of Intent - One year ago, I woke up one morning and before even getting out of bed or opening the blinds, I unlocked my phone and started scrolling endlessly in my social media. One hour later, I realised that I was still in bed without even noticing anything else around me; it was like I was trapped in this lifeless bubble that those apps created. And that was the moment when the idea of "Social" came up in my mind. Because, behind its oddly utopian atmosphere and the mystery of waking up in an idyllic, instagrammable -yet totally empty- world, "Social" is nothing more than a story about our current way of life. Having technology, social media and our everyday relationship with them as its main themes, the series has the veil of science fiction, but, in its core, all of its individual components are totally realistic and relatable. Of course, the series does not intend to wag its finger to the audience with aphoristic, stereotypical clichés like "technology will destroy us all", but to talk in a symbolic way about an empty life that we all experience more or less. We all order from online shops that don't physically exist, we talk alone in instagram

stories, we ramble about our lives in voice messages, while nobody is hearing us on the other side... We all create profiles in apps and through them we live a life parallel to our own real life. That is the reason why "Social" is not a series created to cater exclusively to sci-fi fans, but to appeal to a larger audience, as members of all demographics can relate nowadays to the use of social media in their lives. Ultimately, the series' main goal (and my personal goal as well) is to tell a story that entertains the audience with its compelling mystery, while raising a question to the viewer. What would happen, if one day we actually experienced this weird emptiness of social media? What if all the people around us disappeared and only their online accounts were left? And we ended up alone... having to face our profile picture. ■



Smile Shine Repeat

An artistic swimmer addicted to painkillers and her teammates pursue the Olympic dream under an authoritative coach, while a journalist looks into the recent suicide of one of the girls.

Production Details

Country: Portugal

Stage of production: Script Development

Expected Runtime: 48 Pages

Genre: Fiction

Languages: Portuguese

Estimated budget: 1.400.000,00 EUR

Supporting Institutions: No supporting institutions at the moment.

Writer: Diogo Figueira

Producer: Maria & Mayer



■ Diogo Figueira

Creator and writer

diogo.s.figueira@gmail.com



■ Isabel Pestana

Head Of Development

isabel.pestana@mariaemayer.com

Synopsis ■ Under Marcos Pavel, a renowned and authoritative coach, the star duet of Portuguese artistic swimming, Diana and Sara, train to qualify for the Olympics at a high performance center, sided by Elisa, a backup swimmer.

At 32, the ambitious Diana is crunched by chronic shoulder pain (result of constant injuries) and rests on Elisa's supply chain of illegal painkillers. Exhausted, Sara has to balance long hours of training with a promising scientific career. Best friends for years, the pair loses focus while Elisa shows promise and threatens the duet's long standing dynamic.

That's why nothing could anticipate that Elisa would try to commit, barely surviving. Diana and Sara go in the pool, hoping to breathe underwater but they're shaken. Sara wants out. Diana's shoulder aches more than ever and she's out of drugs and out of a dealer.

Summoned by Pavel, the young sisters Beatriz, perfectionist and bulimic, and Tânia, irreverent and spontaneous, appear unexpectedly as replacing duet. But Diana won't let go. She's at the end of her career, she knows this is her last shot at the Olympics. She must convince Sara to stay. She must get her painkillers while Elisa is in a coma. She must monitor Beatriz and Pavel's dangerously close relationship. She must not fall in love with Tânia. And she must ward off a journalist investigating Elisa's suicide attempt and Pavel's unkind methods.

Training is everything but training isn't enough. It's about taking pain — and, sometimes, inflicting it.

About the Author ■ Diogo co-wrote the short film *By Flávio* (72nd Berlinale), both seasons of the fictional series *Three Women* (nominated for the PRIX Europe and the Portuguese Author's Guild Award) and *The Labyrinth*

of *Longing* (Sophia Award for Best Documentary). In 2020, he was selected for *Canneseries Unlimited*, a residency where he began writing an original series that is under development. Since 2021, he has premiered two plays, co-written the television adaptation of the best-selling Portuguese novel *Fateful Dawn* (to be aired in 2023) and scripted the feature film *Entroncamento* (directed by Pedro Cabeleira and currently in post-production). He premiered his first short film as a director, *Sagrada Família*, at *IndieLisboa'23*.

Note of Intent ■ The series is built on a tragic contradiction that's inherent to the world of sports: in high performance competition, abuse can lead to glory. Olympic athletes are archetypes we admire for their willingness to exceed limits. But at what cost?

In the last 30 years, 37 olympic athletes from all sorts of sports have committed suicide. Artistic swimming is, on an international level, one of the sports that is most permeable to abuse (physical, emotional, psychological), which push swimmers to depression, anxiety, burnout, substance abuse and body dysmorphia while pursuing the Olympic dream. Underestimated in real life and underdeveloped in fiction, artistic swimming combines swimming, dancing, music and theatre; it is considered one of the world's most demanding sports (where you must practice obsessively to achieve minimal performance increases) as well as one of the most dangerous ones (straining apneas, concussions, fractures, recurrent injuries, among others). Its aesthetic component seeks perfection and synchrony, subjugated to an aggressive ideal of beauty (smiling, thinness, make up, uniformity) and is one of the rare sports where art can win medals. It hides unexpected conflicts with big dramatic potential and a visual beauty that can create a powerful, fresh,

hypnotic aesthetic. It will be like letting the viewers into a dark and shining secret that will surely surprise them. ■



Odeceixe United

When Abdul, son of a rich oil tycoon, mistakenly buys a football club in the middle of rural Portugal, he gets cut out from his inheritance. That is, until he finds a way to turn a profit.

Production Details

Country: Portugal, Montenegro, Saudi Arabia

Stage of production: Concept

Expected Runtime: 40m per episode

Genre: Comedy

Languages: Portuguese, English, Montenegrin, Arabic

Estimated budget: 5000000

Supporting Institutions: None yet

Director & Writer: Vasco Viana, Gana Comagic

Producer: Gana Comagic



■ Vasco Viana

Creator, Writer, Director

vasco.cinema.2018@gmail.com

Synopsis ■ A comedy about a football club in the middle of rural Portugal that gets mistakenly bought by Abdul (30), the son of a wealthy oil tycoon. Faced with the prospect of lifelong exile by his father, Abdul must raise Odeceixe United from roubles to riches with the the help of washed up Montenegrin coach Zoran and young ambitious Vanessa.

Zoran Dragić (60) was once touted as one of the most promising young coaches in former Yugoslavia, way back in the 90s. When the Balkan war erupted, Zoran stayed in his home country to create a safe environment for young football players. As decades go on, Zoran's dreams of making it big on the international stage flame out, until he gets a call from Abdul.

Vanessa Rodrigues (25) is graduating from the prestigious Universidade Nova in Lisbon and according to the strict chronogram of her life, she is en route to become the first female prime minister of Portugal, by the time she is 40. That is, until she arrives in Odeceixe for her diploma internship, and finds a town forgotten in time, refusing to update itself to the commodities of the 21st century. But Vanessa won't be deterred from her fate. She takes matters into her own hands and devises a masterplan to bring Odeceixe back to the present. As Odeceixe slowly grows from a deserted town to a new beacon for globalization, the villagers witness their precious home being taken over by foreigners, and are none too pleased about that, as the new football team Odeceixe United grows in popularity.

About the Author ■ Vasco Maria Basto Viana is a Portuguese writer and director, born in Porto in 1992. He graduated with a BA in Fine Arts from ESAP, Escola Superior Artística do Porto in 2013, and completed his Masters in Contemporary Art in

the Faculdade de Belas Artes da Universidade do Porto, in 2015. From 2015 to 2018 he lived in Barcelona, where he discovered his passion for cinema and completed a one year post-grad in Film Directing, in Nou Prodigii. It was in Barcelona that he wrote and directed his first two short films, *The Spinning Wheel* and *The Labyrinth*. In 2018, he moved to Prague to study directing in the Master's program at FAMU, Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts, where he graduated in June 2023. From 2018 to 2023 he has directed over fifteen short films, music videos and theater plays, and is completing his first feature, his graduation film *The Smetanovo 5*.

In 2020, he founded the Grand Acting Studio, a workshop for amateur actors, where he explored various techniques in directing actors for film. There, he directed five short films, including two with Ukrainian refugees, in the scope of the pro bono project *Acting 4 Ukraine*. In 2022 he co-founded *Sizzle Real*, a company dedicated to shooting showreel scenes for up and coming actors in Prague. He is currently developing the series *Behind the Wall* in the scope of the Midpoint Program, which he will be presenting in the Tallinn film festival, in November 2023.

Note of Intent ■ What if the remote Portuguese village of Odeceixe was suddenly taken over by new money? It is from this seemingly absurd premise that our story kicks into gear, as a reflection of the growing gentrification brought about by new money today. Our world has never been smaller. Immigration has become a way of life, as the promise of a better life meets the possibilities of immediate travel. But globalization has its setbacks: locals are being priced out of their homes by the tourism industry; towns and cities are losing their cultural identity to a global market, which levels all the little imperfections that

used to make them unique; and new money from dubious sources threatens to buy all that is for sale. A great example of the gentrification brought about by new money is the current fad of buying football teams and turning them into global brands, and it is precisely that trope that we want to explore in our series: What are the consequences of spending money without context or knowledge of the people and places you are affecting, and the roots of their cultural identity?

Going deeper into the concept of a place untouched by passing time, we are setting this story in the small village of Odeceixe, in Portugal, a perfect arena to explore a community of people who have possibly never seen foreigners in their land. "Odeceixe United" is a dark comedy about cultural idiosyncrasies and assimilation, the dangers of new money and the perseverance of the human spirit. ■



Kreuzberg Brothers Detective Office

Kreuzberg Brothers Detective Office

Production Details

Country: Germany

Stage of production: Ready for Shooting

Expected Runtime: 32 pages

Genre: Fiction

Languages: German

Estimated budget: 550.000 Euros

Supporting Institutions: Turkish online streaming services

Director & Writer: Hasan Karademir



■ **Hasan Karademir**

Creator

hasan.karademir@artdecoagency.com

Synopsis ■ In the heart of Berlin's Kreuzberg neighborhood, three close friends who happen to be immigrants from Turkey decide to embark on a unique venture by opening a detective agency. Their motivation is twofold: to gain acceptance within the Kreuzberg community and to generate some income.

However, the reality of running a detective agency turns out to be far from what they expected. Instead of handling detective cases, the team finds themselves caught up in a series of strange, funny and inexplicable events. To keep their agency afloat, they must navigate these unusual situations with determination.

About the Author ■ Hasan Karademir, the producer and screenwriter of the series, is a seasoned professional who established Art Deco Creative Agency in London following his extensive media experience in Turkey and the Middle East. His diverse professional and personal encounters across Europe, Turkey, and the Middle East served as the driving inspiration behind this project. With a shared vision, Hasan and his agency aspire to cultivate a global reputation by creating innovative, original content.

Note of Intent ■ The series, created by Hasan Karademir, aims to bring a unique blend of comedy and detective work to the screen, highlighting

the immigrant experience. It explores universal themes of friendship, acceptance, and the pursuit of identity within the rich tapestry of Berlin's multicultural landscape. The characters' personal journeys are woven into the larger narrative, creating a series that is both entertaining and thought-provoking.

This project is unique and engaging, blending comedy and detective work with the experiences of migrants. It stands out from conventional comedy series due to its distinctiveness and humor. Spanning multiple regions, including Europe, Turkey, and the Middle East, the project has significant potential. ■







Projects —
Make It Short



My father has three shadows

How do you learn to live with an inherited absence?

Production Details

Country: Argentina

Stage of production: Ready for Shooting

Expected Runtime: Around 6 min

Genre: Drama, Human Rights

Languages: Spanish

Estimated budget: 35000

Supporting Institutions: APA Lab, Fondo Nacional de las Artes, different humans rights agrupations in Argentina have sent letters of interest

Director & Writer: Gabriela Clar

Producer: Irene Blei



■ **Gabriela Clar**

Director

gaby.clar@gmail.com

Synopsis - A girl is walking down the street with her father one day when she discovers something really strange about him: her father has three shadows, one that belongs to him, and two more that are not. Over time she realizes that not only her father, but also her grandmother and even herself who have those two extra shadows that seem to grow or shrink depending on the day. The girl then seeks answers about those shadows, who they were, and what it means to have them.

About the Author - Visual artist and animator born in Argentina in 1994.

Specialized in cell animation, cut out animation and other traditional techniques. Member of the Argentinian Network of Women in Animation (RAMA), an animation community founded on ideals of sorority and collaboration, since its creation in 2018. Graduated as an Animation major in November 2018 from the Instituto de Artes Cinematográficas de Avellaneda. Currently attending the National University of the Arts of Argentina majoring in fine arts, specializing in etching and print making.

Filmography: “Veó, Veó” - Co-Director - 2019 (Comunal film by the collective RAMA (Argentinian Network of Women in Animation); “En boca de todas” - Co-Director - 2018 (Comunal film by the collective RAMA (Argentinian Network of Women in Animation); “Yikásdáhí - Espera el amanecer” - Director, Producer, Animator - 2018 (Graduation film made with Cutout animation, based on a Navajo legend); Spot for the Liga de la Animación Iberoamericana (Ibero American Animation League) “By RAMA” 2020 - Producer.

Note of Intent - This story I want to tell has been in my head in one form or another for years. It is a way to evidence, in a certain way, these common and collective demons of Argentine society, this traumatic legacy of the last military dictatorship: the “Desaparecidos”, people who were abducted and killed by the armed forces between after the 1976 Coup d’etat in Argentina.

That is why I seek to make this short film, I want to express this feeling, this experience, that so many of us go through, told in a very personal way.

My uncle, Sergio Andrés Clar and my grandfather, Mario César Clar, were kidnapped in 1977. My father, at the time a teenager, lost his brother and his father, in a way that is so terribly violent and hard to imagine. My grandmother, lost her son. How do we explain or try to make sense of something so horrible?

And for me personally: how can I explain this strange, second-hand wound, how it feels to be a family member of the Desaparecidos, but of the “second generation”, so to speak. I only knew Mario and Sergio, my uncle and grandfather, through photographs and anecdotes. I want to highlight this deep scar that my family, and so many other citizens of Argentina have in their past and in their present, and now more than ever, with so much horror and injustice in the world, it’s important to remember our history, and see how it still resonates through the present. ■



Dead Angles

It is night, at a border gas station. The cries for help from migrant people trapped inside a locked truck spark a fierce clash between two truckers, involving everyone present at the gas station.



■ **Jan Amor Sandiumenge**
 Writer and director
jansamour@hotmail.com

Production Details

Country: Spain

Stage of production: Script Development

Expected Runtime: 20 min

Genre: Drama, Black Comedy, Human Rights, Thriller

Languages: Portuguese, French, Catalan, English

Estimated budget: 100000

Supporting Institutions: None

Director & Writer: Jan Amor Sandiumenge

Producer: Jordi B. Oliva

Synopsis ■ French truck driver DOMINIQUE meets Spanish sheep trucker SERGIO in the parking lot of a border gas station. The sudden cries for help from a group of migrant people trapped inside Dominique's truck interrupts their chatter. Sergio wants to call the police, but Dominique insists on freeing them. Dominique ignores Sergio's threats and releases the migrants from his truck, leaving only WANDA, a pregnant vulnerable Malian woman. Dominique attempts to help her, but Sergio stops him, accusing him of trafficking. Cornered, Dominique opens Sergio's truck and releases the sheep inside, sparking a violent fight. Meanwhile, a bus full of tourists has pulled into the gas station. MIQUEL, the manager, catches a tourist backpacker stealing. He takes him to his office and calls the police. Colombian employee LEIDI, who has witnessed the truckers' fight via the surveillance monitor, sees Wanda escaping the truck and hiding in the restrooms. Two police agents arrive as Sergio bursts into the shop dragging a badly injured Dominique and arrest both. Miquel exits his office, leaving the backpacker locked inside. The tourists rush out the shop to film a dozen sheep wandering in the gas pumps. Leidi watches the chaos from the counter, grabs a sweater and a cap and heads to the restrooms. Locked in the police car, Dominique recognizes Wanda, disguised in new clothes, boarding the bus like any other tourist. Leidi watches the bus departure with a victorious smile.

About the Author ■ Jan Amor is a Spanish screenwriter and film director. Born in Rabat (1996) to international journalists, he grew up between Barcelona and Cairo. He pursued his passion for filmmaking by studying Directing at the French public film school in Toulouse (ENSAV), and later specializing in screenwriting at the Cuban Film School (EICTV). Fluent in four languages and possessing

a strong intercultural background, Jan enjoys collaborating on international projects committed to global issues and social justice and teaching cinema to young people at risk of social exclusion. For Jan, cinema is both a lifestyle and a tool for understanding and reshaping the world. He has written, directed and self-produced numerous short fiction films. "Aller Simple" (2022, 25') was featured at the Cannes Short Film Corner and selected in various international festivals, such as Love Your Short Film Festival and Funcinema. Jan has also explored documentary filmmaking with "Island of Turtles" (2019, 13'), focusing on migration and refugee challenges in Lesbos, Greece, which was awarded with the Gollut Prize for young filmmakers 2022. Jan is currently working as a screenwriter in "El nostre irlandès" (Our Irishman), a Krik Krak Productions animated historical documentary film focusing on the life of one of the earliest Catalan separatists, which has been selected for the 2024 Campus DocsBarcelona festival. Jan is also writing his first fiction feature project, "Curriculum".

Note of Intent ■ I've always been drawn to unique universes and exploring reality through symbolic elements. Growing up, I fed my imagination with Franz Kafka and Roald Dahl, which left a mark on my first short films. Here I follow the same path: the isolated gas station where the film unfolds is a metaphorical microcosm to reflect on the physical and mental borders dividing our society. "Dead Angles" is a social thriller that balances intense tension with moments of dark humor, evoking the tone and claustrophobic atmosphere of Coen brothers' films like "Fargo" or "No Country For Old Men". I also draw from Fellini's chaos and Altman's ensemble-driven narratives. The title, taken from the sticker on Dominique's truck, refers to the limited capacity we and the characters have to judge reality. The surveillance cameras,

the only silent witness of the whole picture, also have dead angles. I want to play with these margins, allowing viewers to see what evades the cameras. The idea of this film was born during my travels along the European borders following refugee routes. I took many buses, stopped in many gas stations and met many people involved in the migrant drama, whether driven by necessity, solidarity, profit or chance. In an era of forced displacement, "Angles Morts" wants to reflect upon an universal issue, the devastating consequences of division, xenophobia and hostile migration policies and the urgent need to take an informed stance. Who are the sheep in this story? ■



Moonlike

In an almost uninhabited village the Moon falls into nothingness. Berto the papier-mâché maker secretly builds a fake Moon to restore hope to his town: it seems exactly identical to the previous one.

Production Details

Country: Italy

Stage of production: Pre-Production

Expected Runtime: 19'

Genre: Drama, Mystery, Surreal

Languages: Italian

Estimated budget: 89.000

Supporting Institutions: Arri Italia and Fondazione Carnevale di Putignano - Waiting for Apulia Film Fund Result

Director & Writer: Francesco Lorusso, Patrizia Manconi

Producer: Matteo Laguni



■ Francesco Lorusso

Co-writer and Director

franco.ga.93@gmail.com

Synopsis - During a patronal festival, in an imaginary village, the Moon falls sharply into nothingness, beyond the horizon. The few inhabitants of the town, in a panic, take refuge in their homes, safe from the catastrophic consequences which, however, never seem to arrive. Like frightened animals, the inhabitants are no longer able to leave the house, they survive the dark nights lost, accompanied by many questions.

At night, the priest asks Berto the papier-mâché maker to secretly build a new Moon to replace the missing one and restore hope to the town. Berto, devoured by profound moral doubts, he fears not succeeding in the undertaking or, even worse, becoming the architect of a great deception.

Once built and secretly raised into the sky, the new Moon appears indistinguishable from the previous one. The priest calls for a miracle and the community rejoices for the return of the old Moon. Meanwhile, Berto, deeply troubled, decides to reveal the truth to everyone: he shoots the Moon with a rifle to make it fall but it, intangible, remains suspended in the sky. This arouses in Berto the anguishing fear that even the previous Moon could have been a deception, just like his. Everyone flees in terror from the gunshots. Berto, enraged at the priest, continues to shoot uncontrollably, accidentally hitting a house. Through a bullet hole, Berto discovers an incredible truth: the entire country is made of papier-mâché.

About the Author - Francesco Lorusso was born in Gagliano del Capo (LECCE) in 1993. He experimented with and studied cinema and audiovisual art as a self-taught individual. He moved to Turin to study philosophy and to Estonia to deepen his studies in Visual Semiotics and Moral Philosophy.

In 2013, he founded the association Broga Doite (composed of Broga's, the commercial section, and Broga Doite Film, the cinema section) with Gabriele Licchelli and Andrea Settembrini. Since 2014, he has directed and edited documentaries and fiction short films focusing on the themes of migration, memory, and identity, often infused with a certain fascination for the magical aspects of reality and absurd premises. These projects have been supported by national and international productions, selected, and awarded at numerous festivals (IDFA, MakeDox, Visioni Italiane, Torino Film Festival, Festival dei Popoli, ShoRTS International Film Festival, Fescaaal, Lago Film Festival, Busan International Kids and Youth Film Festival, Festival del Cinema Europeo, Premio Zavattini...).

In parallel, he directs and post-produces music videos for national artists and labels (Jovanotti, Negramaro, MrRain, Irama, Pinguini Tattici Nucleari, Sony, Warner). Through these works, he has gained more technical experience, mastery of complex sets, and post-production and VFX capabilities. He has also refined his authorial and photographic eye working both as a director and as a director of photography.

Note of Intent - "Long live the theatre, where everything is fake, but nothing is false" is the beginning of a poem by Gigi Proietti, who suggests that the opposite of fake is not the true as we usually think, but the false: fiction is an honest thing, while it is falsehood that is dishonest.

We live in an unprecedented time of transition, in which we are constantly called upon to question what is in front of us, to determine not so much what is true and what is not, but what is fake and what is false. This effort to determine insinuates an even more fundamental doubt: it prompts us to question what reality is.

The story told in 'Moonlike' starts from these assumptions and explores the ultimate idea that everything about the way we see the world is nothing more than a human construct, and that we often forget this.

Hence the idea of the protagonist, a constructor of fictions, in this case Berto, a papermaker, who is called upon for the good of the community to construct something false.

The visual approach of the film is integral to its meaning. The narrative, in black and white, unfolds through a few recurring locations, always filmed at night, always from a single long shot. The characters seem like distant silhouettes, like small puppets weighed down by their own tragedy, living and moving within a miniature world.

Furthermore, to accentuate the sense of fiction and latent surreality, I intend to adopt the miniature technique for the realisation of the moon and the final scene of the short film. ■



Untitled Vacation Project

This is a short film about a family vacation that will visually explore the connection between someone who is closeted and someone who is blind.

Production Details

Country: USA

Stage of production: Pre-Production

Expected Runtime: 20min

Genre: Drama, Independent, LGBTQ+,
Romance, Surreal

Languages: English

Estimated budget: 30000

Supporting Institutions: None at the moment

Director & Writer: Jacob LaMendola

Producers: Abby Davis; Reed Adler



■ **Jacob LaMendola**

Writer / Director

jacoblamendola@gmail.com

Synopsis ■ Jacob joins his middle school girlfriend, Julie, on vacation with her parents, Dennis and Pam. Jacob, while young, is knowingly hiding the fact that he is gay, not only from Julie and her family, but himself. This becomes a source of deep insecurity when he is confronted with the opportunity to be intimate with Julie. Ignoring Julie's advances, Jacob becomes more interested in spending time with her father Dennis, who is blind. On the last day of the vacation, it begins to rain. Cooped up in the hotel room and frustrated by the events of the vacation, Julie becomes angry and takes it out on her father. Jacob decides to stay in the room with Dennis instead of joining Julie and her mother to watch the storm. Now alone together, Dennis suggest they watch a movie. Because he is blind, Jacob will have to explain things as necessary. Scrolling through the possible titles, they decide to watch "Me, Myself, and Irene," a Jim Carrey comedy from 2000 by the Farrelly Brothers. For the first time on the vacation, Jacob is forced to confront his sexuality and explain explicit details to Dennis that appear on screen. Jacob watches Dennis instead of the movie. It is the first time he's seen a man up close, and because Dennis cannot see, Jacob is able to observe him freely. Despite laughter, Jacob sees a man in pain. The lights go out in the room, cutting the film short. Jacob and Dennis share silence.

About the Author ■ Jacob LaMendola is an award-winning US based filmmaker. His first documentary short, ANOSMIA, explores the lives of people who like Jacob, are unable to smell. The film premiered at the Cannes Film Festival and was published as an Op-Doc in The New York Times. Inspired by a piece of IMDB trivia, Jacob spent five years creating LONG SHOT. The film tells the story of Juan Catalan, whose alibi to escape a murder charge involved an episode of Curb Your Enthusiasm. In 2017, LONG

SHOT premiered at the Telluride Film Festival and was released as a Netflix Original Documentary. Noted for its warm, humanistic approach, Telluride's executive director praised LONG SHOT as one her favorites of the year, declaring it as "a movie that I will probably watch a good couple of times before the end of my life." In 2023, Jacob was selected as one of fifty filmmakers from around the world to attend the CREATOR'S LAB under the mentorship of Palme d'Or winning director Apichatpong Weerasethakul. The documentary created during the lab is currently being prepared for a fall festival run. Today, Jacob is in pre-production on his first narrative short in over ten years, about a vacation he took as a boy.

Note of Intent ■ Dennis was the first man I ever saw up close, and it was only because he couldn't see me look. The impact of this took twenty years to wrap my arms around. It was this interaction that birthed the courage in me to look at what I found attractive – beyond sexuality. I want to make a film about this experience and explore the connection between someone who is closeted and someone who is blind. Personally, I've never seen this relationship in cinema before, which to me is the reason to pursue it with confidence. There are many filmmakers who have an influence, but as an artist, James Baldwin is the strongest. When I was 30, I first read "Giovanni's Room," and up until then, I never considered I could turn to literature to understand pain. That's what I hope to offer an audience with this film. In terms of challenges, casting is where I need the most help. I want to find an actual blind person to play the role of Dennis, and for all the roles to feel lived in and alive. So much so, that the audience will see real people, not characters. I feel after making documentary for ten years that now is the perfect time for me to use those skills to create space for performance. For many years I've hidden myself in other people's

stories, but many artists I admire have said that being personal one becomes universal. To me this feels like a step towards a world I want to create for myself in my art. ■



The Fishwife

A fishwife tries to sell fish in the traditional way.

Production Details

Country: Portugal

Stage of production: Pre-Production

Expected Runtime: 7 min

Genre: Children (Animation or Live Action), Comedy

Languages: Portuguese, English

Estimated budget: 51.410

Supporting Institutions: Don't have

Director & Writer: Alexandra Allen; Sara Allen;

Ricardo Adrêgo

Producers: Sara Allen



■ **Alexandra Allen**
Director
xanaallen@gmail.com



■ **Sara Allen**
Scriptwriter
sara_allen@epixarte.com

Synopsis ■ “A Peixeira - The Fishwife” is a 2D animated short film, which narrative is presented in a comic tone to children. It revolves around an old fishwife who tries to sell fish at the city streets, as she has traditionally done throughout her life. Being a widow with no family around, we later discover the reason why she continues to work is related to her need to be socially active.

However, a new supermarket opens in her city and steals all her customers, the few she had. Because, out of convenience, people prefer to do their shopping in the new commercial area.

Being a curious person, the Fishwife visits the supermarket to try to understand what the place has to offer, especially in her area of knowledge: the fish section. There, she is faced with a disorganized and inexperienced young employee, who generates a long line of anxious customers. Upon contemplating the situation, the Fishwife sees an opportunity to sell fish in the supermarket and begins a succession of failed attempts that go on an increasing scale of comical daring which include attempts to: formally apply for a job; imposing her presence in the fish section; shamelessly selling fish in the aisles; selling fish undercover; between others. However, she is always kicked out by the supermarket manager.

Already feeling hopeless, we discover that, more than wanting to sell fish for any monetary need, the protagonist just needs company. We see that she lives alone, is grumpy and initially averse to new company. This evolution will be illustrated in an adjacent character, a cat, who will appear in humorous situations throughout the fishwife's journey.

The narrative concludes when the Fishwife finds a flyer advertising a new local fish shop that delivers fish at home. She decides to go

to the place and there she meets the employee who was previously working at the supermarket. As the girl is still too clumsy, the Fishwife invites herself to work with her, thus bequeathing her knowledge and friendship.

About the Author ■ Porto (Portugal) 1993. She attended at Escola Secundária Artística Soares dos Reis where she specialized in Audiovisual Communication. Graduated in Fine Arts - Multimedia - from the Faculdade de Belas-Artes of the University of Porto, in 2015. In 2017 she finished her master's degree in Illustration and Animation, from Instituto Politécnico do Cávado e do Ave, where she made the short film “O Chapéu” (2017), winner of the Sophia Student Prize in 2018. She taught animation workshops at Universidade Júnior, Cinanima and IndieJúnior. She currently works as an illustration and animation freelancer. As an animation film author, she actively presents projects at national and international film festivals. Some of her projects are: “Foxtale”, “O Chapéu” and “Midgård Fölk”. Filmography: In pre-production: “A Peixeira - The Fishwife” 2024; “As Sete Caixas / The Seven Boxes” (Caixa dos sonhos); 2022 “Foxtale”; 2017 “O Chapéu / The Hat”; 2016 “Fora de Alcance” - co-direction; 2014 “Midgård Folk”

Note of Intent ■ “A Peixeira - The Fishwife” is an animated short-film about a traditional fish seller, who is faced with the challenges of a modern and complacent society, which seeks to shop in a single place.

I considered important to address to a cultural and traditional aspect of my country (Portugal) that is being lost along the time, so that it doesn't get away from our memories. I can still perfectly remember the fishwives walking along the streets with a basket in their heads, while projecting the voice making their call to the

neighbourhood. This moment gradually disappeared with the appearance of the commercial areas, which conveniently made available all type of products.

Unlike the interaction provided by the door-to-door sales, these new supermarkets present an impersonal commerce that has reduced contact and proximity with the people who live around us, in addition to providing more and more frozen and pre-cooked products, rather than a variety of fresh food.

My intention is to revive and share a memory of something that was so characteristic on the portuguese coast, transmitting our values and traditions to a younger audience, passing a legacy to a younger generation.

Also, I intend to address the loneliness and abandonment of the older generation. The Fishwife is a representation of a widow aged around 70, who continues to sell fish as an excuse to leave the house and socialize with people. As she lives alone, in a modest house, the character tries to maintain a persevering spirit in order to achieve her goals.

The main objective of this short animation is to convey a message of compassion for others, valuing the wisdom of our elders and preserving our cultural identity.

The final intention for this short film is to circulate through national and international festivals, spreading a little of my cultural roots around the world. ■



Clinic

A woman, institutionalized in a psychiatric clinic, and a man who, in spite of his ordinary appearance, is plagued by dark thoughts, meet each other every two days in a forest to make love.

Production Details

Country: Greece

Stage of production: Script Development

Expected Runtime: 20min

Genre: Drama, Neo-noir, Thriller

Languages: Greek

Estimated budget: 40000

Supporting Institutions: None

Director & Writer: Penelope Mavropsaridi



■ **Penelope Mavropsaridi**

Writer/Director

penelopemav@gmail.com

Synopsis ■ Gina is institutionalized in a psychiatric clinic. When she meets Petros, an ordinary young man who, despite this ordinary appearance, hides dark thoughts inside his head, she will start a sexual relationship with him, deep inside the forest. But in the forest, away from prying eyes, Petros' true self will come to the surface.

About the Author ■ Penelope Mavropsaridi was born in Athens, Greece, in 1996. She has studied film directing in the Hellenic Cinema and Television School Stavrakos, and also theater in the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. She has worked in film and television productions, in the assistant directing and casting departments. She has also written, produced and directed her student short film, "Why Won't You Dance" (greek title: Giati den horeveis?) (2023), which premiered in the Drama Short Film Festival in Greece.

Note of Intent ■ I wrote this script after hearing a story from a friend of mine about a guy that made a habit of visiting women in the mental hospital, and beginning sexual relationships with them. This subject really intrigued me, because it's not something you come across every day, but also because the dynamic of such relationships could cross many boundaries and become toxic and abusive really fast, due to the vulnerable position these women find themselves in.

This script touches on such subjects as misogyny, violence inside the relationship and toxic relationships. In Greece the last few years there is a rise in intimate partner violence and the murder of women, highlighting how gender equality exists in name only. The audience I would like to reach is mainly young women, because I, as a woman who has been in an

abusive relationship, am sure that had I been exposed to media that showcase how easily relationships can turn toxic, I would have been better prepared for my experiences. The film is suitable for international audiences, because of the universality of the subject.

The script is laden with surrealist elements and I would like to keep an element of mystery to as what is real and what isn't. For the image of the film, I draw inspiration from neo noir thrillers and their use of lighting and atmosphere. The camera will be handheld for most scenes, symbolizing the frenzy of the relationship, allowing the viewer to delve into the characters' mindset and mood. ■



Say Cheese

Belarusian IT-guy Jan receives a call from the KGB and tries to flee. He confronts creepy neighbours, moldy cheese, and even his own family. If he stays — he loses his freedom. If he leaves — he loses everything else.

Production Details

Country: Poland

Stage of production: Pre-Production

Expected Runtime: 20 min

Genre: Black Comedy, Genre, Surreal, Thriller

Languages: Belarusian

Estimated budget: 98000

Supporting Institutions: Belarusian Content Lab

Director & Writer: Vera Filenko



■ **Vera Filenko**
creative producer/director/
scriptwriter
vera@kemliva.com

Synopsis ■ One day, Ian (34), a programmer, is summoned by the KGB for questioning about his donations to protests, while his wife, Kira (31), samples cheeses at the store owned by their creepy neighbors, Lipa and her son Arthur. From that day, everything starts to unravel.

Ian decides to dodge the interrogation and flee the country with his family. Kira doesn't support his plan: despite having suffered for participating in protests herself, she doesn't want to abandon their settled life. Ian is plagued by alarming calls and messages, a black minivan seems to follow him everywhere, and the neighbors act increasingly weird. Kira also changes — obsessively eating cheeses, manipulating their daughter, and gaslighting Ian.

Ian tries to fix the situation as best he can, but eventually loses control and spirals into paranoia. Driven and confused — by either horrific visions or his own mind — he decides they must leave immediately, but Kira tears up his passport. Ian gradually loses everything: his wife, daughter, and sanity. With nothing left to lose, he furiously sets the neighbors' store on fire and waits alone for the end.

About the Author ■ Vera Filenko, fiction writer, screenwriter, creative director and aspiring film director from Belarus with vast experience in creative services and advertising.

Graduated from Wajda Film School, FILM BRIDGE and SCRIPT programs (2021-

2023, Warsaw). Finalist of the Studio Munk program for young directors "30 minutes" (2023, Warsaw), a fellow of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage program "Gaude Polonia," managed by the National Centre of Culture of Poland (2023, Warsaw).

Co-author of the full-length screenplay "Until This Summer" (co-written with Daria Zhuk, a member of the Directors Guild of America), in February 2023 presented at the Berlinale as a part of the Belarusian Independent Film Academy presentation. Vera is currently based in Warsaw.

Note of Intent ■ They say seeing is believing, so I'd better not tell, but show and share a short video where I explain why this story means so much to me personally. You can watch it at this link https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iK8U87OAGHO6w_1o6zJU2p2fpZrt6Ccpp/view?usp=sharing. Also, this project is bigger than just me.

This story is rather common: making choice without choice, family crisis of communication and expectations, so I believe it might work for a broad auditory. But also I believe it's one of the few ways to reach a global audience and share what's happening in Belarus today – the atmosphere people live in and what they are fleeing from. I work in advertising and know it's pointless to push the topic's importance in Serious Media Sources – you need to naturally fit where the audience is and look like what they're used to. That's why a bright, short, almost music-video-style film, watchable in 20 minutes on a familiar platform, should do the trick.

I also want this film to promote Belarusian cinema as a whole. We have many talented professionals and bright creators, and I want to shine a light on them with my project. I believe a new, unique Belarusian wave is emerging – like the Romanian New Wave, the Greek "Weird Wave," or Nigeria's "Nollywood." We have the skills and the passion to create powerful, bold works – and to do it with joy, creativity, and freedom. We have stories to tell and insights to share, but it's

tough to do so without support. And that's what I'm asking for. ■

FILMS FESTIVAL REALIZADO POR FESTIVAL FILMS NOVO CINEMA RECORDS NEW FILMS NOVO CINEMA DIRECTÓ VAL

Organização



Co-Produção



Parceiros Institucionais



POÇAS

SOLVERDE

Parceiros de indústria

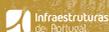
BLEAT



MAILUKI FILMS

MONGE

Apoios



Parceiros Media



DEFESA
DE ESPINHO

emarévia

CINEMAX