



MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE  
D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA  
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2020



La Biennale di Venezia

Arte  
Architettura  
Cinema  
Danza  
Musica  
Teatro  
Archivio Storico

125

# FINAL CUT IN VENICE

VENICE  
7–9.09.2020

VENICE  

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PRODUCTION  

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BRIDGE





MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE  
D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA  
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2020

VENICE PRODUCTION BRIDGE

07.09 – 09.09.2020  
LABIENNALE.ORG  
VENICEPRODUCTIONBRIDGE.ORG

## **FINAL CUT IN VENICE**

La Biennale di Venezia  
Director General  
**Andrea Del Mercato**

Artistic Director  
of the Cinema Department  
**Alberto Barbera**

Venice Production Bridge  
**Pascal Diot**  
**Savina Neirotti**

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Final Cut in Venice  
**Alessandra Speciale**

With the kind support of  
**Thierry Lenouvel**  
**Annouchka De Andrade**  
**Thierry Jobin**

La Biennale di Venezia  
and its collaborators for  
Book of Projects  
**Erika Giorgianni**  
**Lara González Lobo**  
**Jacopo Fabris**  
**Mariachiara Mancini**  
**Chiara Marin**  
**Alessandro Mezzalana**  
**Nikolas Montaldi**  
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Main Broadcaster



Thanks to  
**Db Logic S.r.l.**  
**Festival Scope**

# **FINAL CUT IN VENICE** 8<sup>TH</sup> EDITION

A workshop to support films in post-production from Africa, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria.

The goal of the project is to enhance the role of the Venice International Film Festival as a bridge builder supporting the production of independent quality films coming from Africa and Arab countries; providing concrete help to film production and promoting the competitiveness of their audiovisual products on the international market. The work-in-progress copies of 6 films from different geographical and cultural areas (Algeria, Lebanon, Syria, Tunisia) will be presented. Access is reserved exclusively to Gold, Trade and Online VPB accreditations.

The one-to-one meetings session between the selected projects and the professionals attending the Venice Production Bridge will be organized on September 9<sup>th</sup>.

Due to the current situation the entire Final Cut in Venice programme, including the screenings, workshop and the one-to-one meetings, will take place virtually this year through the VPB website.

## THE PRIZES

The workshop will conclude with the awarding of prizes, in kind or in cash, for the financial support of the films in their post-production phase.

For the fourth year La Biennale di Venezia will give a prize of € 5,000 for the best film in post-production. The **La Biennale di Venezia Prize** will be attributed by a jury composed of three members named by the Festival Director, while the other prizes will be awarded by final and irrevocable decision of the Festival Director, in conjunction with the project supporters, the heads of the institutions, and the service companies providing the prizes.

- € 15,000 for the color correction of a feature-length film, offered by **Laser Film** (Rome) for up to 50 hours of work (technician included);
- up to € 15,000 offered by **Mactari** Mixing Auditorium (Paris) for the sound mixing of a feature length film (up to 12 days of work, sound re-recording mixer not included);
- for feature fiction projects an MG of \$ 10,000 or for feature documentary projects an MG of \$ 3,000 for marketing, publicity and distribution in the Arab World for one Arab project, offered by **MAD Solutions** (except for projects already attached to MAD Solutions);
- up to € 5,000 for color-grading; up to € 3,000 for the production of a DCP master, i-Tunes, Google or Netflix files; up to € 2,000 for French or English subtitles (translation not included), offered by **Titra Film** (Paris);
- up to € 7,500 for the production of the DCP master and Italian or English subtitles, offered by **Sub-Ti Ltd.** (London);
- up to € 7,500 for the accessible contents of the film for audiences with sensory disabilities: subtitles for the deaf and hearing impaired and audio description for the blind and visually impaired, with audio subtitles, in Italian or English, offered by **Sub-Ti Access Srl** (Turin). The SDH file and the audio described soundtrack for DCP will be provided;
- € 5,000 for the purchase of two-year broadcasting rights by **Rai Cinema**;
- \$ 5,000 awarded to one of the Arab projects and an invitation to participate in the industry platform **CineGouna** offered by the **El Gouna Film Festival**;
- € 5,000 offered by the **Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)** to an African or Arab film from a member-country of La Francophonie;
- Prize "Coup de cœur de la Cinémathèque Afrique", offered by **Cinémathèque Afrique of the Institut Français** (Paris). The prize consist of the acquisition of the non commercial and non exclusive broadcasting rights for 7 years with a value of € 4,000 – 6,000 depending on the genre, length and available territories of the film;
- participation in the production costs of a DCP (€ 2,500), offered by the **Festival International du Film d'Amiens**;
- participation in the production costs of a DCP (€ 2,500), offered by the **Festival International de Films de Fribourg**;
- one of the selected films will have the possibility to benefit from the **Eye on Films** label, that will present the film to distributors and festivals affiliated to EoF and will contribute to the communication of the film for a value of € 2,500 during its world premiere in an A-category festival.



Festival International  
de Films de Fribourg



**SCREENINGS through Festival Scope Pro  
PRESENTATIONS AND Q&A through FCV Zoom Lounge**

**Online One-To-One Meetings  
on the VPB website**

**MONDAY  
SEPTEMBER 7, 2020**

**9:30**  
Introduction and opening remarks  
by Alberto Barbera, Artistic Director  
of the 77<sup>th</sup> Venice International Film Festival

**9:45**  
**GARDIEN DES MONDES /  
GUARDIAN OF THE WORLDS**  
**(France, Tunisia) 60'**  
**DIRECTOR** Leïla Chaïbi  
**PRODUCTION** Maud Martin (L'image d'après)  
**GENRE** Documentary  
**LOGLINE** Many years ago, Hassan came home to the Jellaz cemetery in Tunis. Working in solitary, but kept company by a tribe of compelling characters - thousands of spirits, 7 djins, and one special woman - Hassan invites us into his singular life.

+  
**Q&A**  
Gold, Trade  
and Online VPB accreditation only

**11:30**  
**THE BLUE INMATES**  
**(Lebanon) 76'**  
**DIRECTOR** Zeina Daccache  
**PRODUCTION** Zeina Daccache  
(Catharsis-Lebanese Center for Drama  
Therapy)  
**GENRE** Documentary  
**LOGLINE** The Lebanese Penal Code stipulates that "Insane" offenders shall be incarcerated until "Being Cured". The film portrays these offenders' stories through the eyes of "normal" inmates in Roumieh Prison who took the roles in a theatre play of their fellow mentally ill inmates residing in the same prison.

+  
**Q&A**  
Gold, Trade  
and Online VPB accreditation only

**15:00**  
**HADJER - L'OLIVERAIE /  
HADJER - THE OLIVE GROVE**  
**(Algeria, France) 104'**  
**DIRECTOR** Anis Djaad  
**PRODUCTION** Moncef Delici (Alegria  
Production)  
**GENRE** Fiction  
**LOGLINE** In a remote village of Algeria, after that a rumor spreads about her, Hadjer is forced to flee with her son Djamil. This is the beginning of a tormented survival. She will have to fight to protect herself and her son from the city's crooks.

+  
**Q&A**  
Gold, Trade  
and Online VPB accreditation only

**TUESDAY  
SEPTEMBER 8, 2020**

**9:30**  
**SOULA**  
**(Algeria, France) 89'**  
**DIRECTOR** Salah Issaad  
**PRODUCTION** Salah Issaad (Issaad Film  
Productions)  
**GENRE** Fiction  
**LOGLINE** Soula, a young single mother, is rejected by her family in the name of honor. Trying to survive, she finds herself caught up in a spiral of violence. Along the roads of Algeria and through unfortunate encounters in a stunning journey, she heads towards her inevitable destiny.

+  
**Q&A**  
Gold, Trade  
and Online VPB accreditation only

**11:45**  
**AL KHAYAR /  
OUR CHOICES**  
**(Syria, France, Qatar) 101'**  
**DIRECTOR** Salah Al Ashkar  
**PRODUCTION** Etienne de Ricaud  
(Caractères Productions)  
**GENRE** Documentary  
**LOGLINE** Set in Aleppo from the first demonstrations in 2011 up to the evacuation of the city in 2016, *Our Choices* follows the destiny of the revolution through the eyes of Salah Al Ashkar, the witness and protagonist of an impossible revolution, of a utopia that collided with the wall of reality.

+  
**Q&A**  
Gold, Trade  
and Online VPB accreditation only

**15:30**  
**JANA /  
HARVEST**  
**(France, Lebanon,  
Belgium, Qatar, USA) 120'**  
**DIRECTOR** Ely Dagher  
**PRODUCTION** Arnaud Dommerc (Andolfi)  
**GENRE** Fiction  
**LOGLINE** Jana makes her way back to her parents' home in the middle of the night. She has returned unexpectedly after having been abroad and out of touch for a while. She finds herself in a familiar yet strange environment with no choice but to fully immerse herself into the city she was once eager to leave.

+  
**Q&A**  
Gold, Trade  
and Online VPB accreditation only

**WEDNESDAY  
SEPTEMBER 9, 2020**

**9:30 - 16:00**  
One-to-one meetings via the Venice  
Production Bridge website with 6 selected  
projects to find funding, distributions  
possibilities and festival selection.

In order to book the meetings a reserved area  
FCV1to1 will be available to Industry delegates  
(Gold, Trade and Online VPB) on the website  
[www.veniceproductionbridge.org](http://www.veniceproductionbridge.org).

**17:00 - (TBC)**  
**FINAL CUT IN VENICE  
AWARD CEREMONY**  
(Hotel Excelsior, Spazio Incontri  
and Online through the VPB website).



# THE VENICE PRODUCTION BRIDGE WELCOMES THE 6 SELECTED WORK IN PROGRESS FILMS TO THE 8<sup>TH</sup> EDITION OF FINAL CUT IN VENICE, FOR THE FIRST TIME ONLINE.

We have reached an important milestone with the Venice Film Festival having now devoted for eight years three days of the industry activity of Venice Production Bridge exclusively to Africa and the Arab world, contributing to financing the post-production of 6 works in progress and their first launch on the film market.

Due to the health emergency caused by Covid-19, this year, for the first time, we will be holding Final Cut in Venice wholly online. We will definitely miss the warmth of the meetings with the directors, their producers and with the supporters of the project, but we are hoping in an even larger and worldwide participation by our Trade and Gold accredited members who will be able to comfortably view the films and follow the Q&A sessions and the one-to-one meetings from a distance. The formula of the workshop has basically remained unchanged compared to previous years: we will have two days of screening of the working copies of the films, this year in streaming on FestivalScope, reserved for the Trade and Gold accredited members only, and a day of virtual one-to-one meetings where the directors and the producers of the films selected will feature on the online networking platform of the Venice Production Bridge.

We are delighted to welcome once again amongst our supporters the prize of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie. The following now consolidated supporters have confirmed their presence: Laser Film, Mactari Mixing Auditorium, MAD Solutions, TitraFilm, Sub-Ti Ltd, Sub-Ti Access Srl, Rai Cinema, El Gouna Film Festival, Cinémathèque Afrique, Festival International du Film d'Amiens, Festival International de Films de Fribourg and Eye on Films.

In June we received 55 working copies from directors from Africa, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria, about 30% fewer than last year, with the decrease certainly due to the slowdown or suspension of work on films because of the precautionary measures taken to limit the Covid-19 pandemic.

This year's selection shows a perfect balance between fiction and documentary and the presence of no fewer than 4 first works out of the 6 films selected. The working copies come from four different geographic areas: Algeria, Lebanon, Syria and Tunisia. The directors of the films selected include four making their debut, two of whom are Algerian, confirming the rebirth of the country's cinema after years of silence and the workshop's vocation of scouting for new talents, and two documentary makers on their second and third films respectively.

After some years of surprising discoveries from sub-Saharan Africa (in 2017 the first narrative feature film from Sudan, *AKasha* by Hajooj Kuka; in 2018 Lemohang Jeremiah Mosese, the first director of a feature-length film from Lesotho with *Mother, I'm Suffocating. This is My Last Film About you* and again in 2018, *Talking about trees* by Suhaib Gasmelbari, winner at the 2019 Berlinale and, lastly, in 2019 *On the way to the billion* by Dieudo Hamadi, who received the Cannes 2020 label), this year unfortunately these regions of Africa are absent in our selection which leans more towards Arab cinematographies. But we trust in new African projects which have been interrupted by the safety measures and which we hope can be completed in 2021.

We look forward to seeing you this year again to enjoy with us the three days of ateliers, see the new films in gestation and seize on the rare chance to talk about film and its future and I hope there will be many more of us thanks to the incredible ease of digital connection.

Alessandra Speciale  
*Curator of Final Cut in Venice*

SYRIA, FRANCE, QATAR

# AL KHAYAR *OUR CHOICES*

SALAH AL ASHKAR



## SYNOPSIS

Set in Aleppo from 2011 to 2016, the film follows Salah Al Ashkar, the witness and protagonist of an impossible revolution, a utopia that collided with the wall of reality. Starting and ending with the evacuation of Aleppo, the film follows the destiny of the revolution through the encounters made by the director Salah al Ashkar from 2011 to 2016 in Eastern Aleppo, the part of the city that was controlled by the revolution: Zaeem, a tailor for women who turned into an illuminated fighter, Salem a dentist who turned into an intellectual militant, and Habbush, a Sufi singer always casting a nostalgic look on a world that disappeared. Those encounters are all constantly interwoven with Salah's voice over expressing his feelings and reflexions along those years, evoking also his personal and family life.

## LOG-LINE

Set in Aleppo from the first demonstrations in 2011 up to the evacuation of the city in 2016, *Our Choices* follows the destiny of the revolution through the eyes of Salah Al Ashkar, the witness and protagonist of an impossible revolution, of a utopia that collided with the wall of reality.

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**NEED TO COMPLETE THE FILM**

Color grading, sound mixing, English or French subtitles, Master DCP

**GENRE**

Documentary

**CURRENT RUNTIME / ESTIMATED RUNTIME**

101' / 101'

**LANGUAGE / SUBTITLES**

Arabic / English

**BUDGET / FINANCING NEEDED**

€ 237.898 / € 131.898

**MAIN PRODUCTION COMPANY**

Caractères Productions

**PARTNERS ATTACHED**

CNC, Doha Film Institute, Ile de France, Agora Thessaloniki Documentary FF, Scam Atelier des artistes en exil.

**CURRENT STATUS OF PROJECT**

Editing

**FUNDS OR AWARDS RECEIVED**

Aide au développement renforcé (CNC), Post-production grant (Doha Film Institute), writing grants (Scam and Ile de France Region), Docs in Progress Award (Thessaloniki Documentary FF)

**CREATIVE TEAM**

Salah Al Ashkar, *Director*  
François Sculier, *Chief Editor*  
Emmanuel Soland, *Sound Editor (tbc)*  
Benjamin Laurent, *Sound Mixer (tbc)*  
Etienne de Ricaud, *Producer*

**DELEGATE PRODUCTION COMPANY**

Caractères Productions

**MAIN CONTACT PERSON**

Etienne de Ricaud

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**DIRECTOR'S CONTACTS**

Salah Al Ashkar

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Salah Al Ashkar,  
*Director*



Etienne de Ricaud,  
*Producer*

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**DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

*Our Choices* recounts the choices we were all confronted with in this war: to stay in the regime-controlled part of the city and take the risk to be arrested, or move to the free part of the city but take the risk of receiving a bombshell from the sky. To fight, but how? or to leave, but abandoning our relatives and our fight... I would like to bring something specific inside a certain profusion of images coming from Syria, give pause for reflection on the reasons of our collective failure in this struggle; I would like to make visible the divergent behaviors, the differences of opinions and beliefs, the lack of external help, our unpreparedness, divisions, the naivety we often had along these years; I would like *Our Choices* to be a film about lost battles, but also about the tenacious hope which, despite everything, drives us and keeps us alive.

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**DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY**

Born in 1988 in Aleppo, Salah Al Ashkar lives today in Paris. He filmed the uprising of Aleppo from 2011 when he was a university student, until his evacuation in December 2016. During the war in 2012, he co-founded the Aleppo Media Center and later worked as a cameraman, field producer and independent photographer for several international TV channels and news agencies. In 2012 as well, he set up Rouh (The Soul), a structure through which he produced or directed short documentary and fiction films. Since 2017 he's been working on *Our Choices*, with images that he has filmed and kept only for this film.

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**DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY**

**2017** *My Other Half* doc. feature  
**2015** *We Love Syria* doc. feature  
**2015** *A Cemetery Garden* doc. feature  
**2014** *And the Plane Strikes* doc. feature  
**2014** *Ahmar 1 & 2* doc. feature

FRANCE, TUNISIA

# **GARDIEN DES MONDES** *GUARDIAN OF THE WORLDS*

LEÏLA CHAÏBI



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## **SYNOPSIS**

Hassan recalls the first night that Jellaz cemetery became his shelter. After burying his parents, he rested his head at the foot of their graves, fell into a deep sleep, and felt his soul fly. For 40 years he's been living in the cemetery, stationed at the crossroads of two worlds. During the day, we follow Hassan as he greets the dead and living alike and services the space as needed. Sometimes he visits crowded neighborhood cafés and blends into life among the living. Injustice and misery that he witnesses outside of Jellaz meddle with the joy and hope that he feels everyday in his enchanted workspace, home. When the moon rises above the tombs, the civilization below appears only by its lights that blend in with the stars. Time stands still, the shadows come alive and come to life. Hassan then takes the path of dreams. In this in-between, he sees things from the other world. As Hassan prepares for his own life after death, he shares with us his notes on mercy, memory, and love.

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## **LOG-LINE**

Many years ago, Hassan came home to the Jellaz cemetery in Tunis. Working in solitary, but kept company by a tribe of compelling characters - thousands of spirits, 7 djins, and one special woman - Hassan invites us into his singular life.

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**NEED TO COMPLETE THE FILM**

Editing, color grading, sound mixing, English or French subtitles, Master DCP, marketing, publicity and distribution.

**GENRE**

Documentary

**CURRENT RUNTIME / ESTIMATED RUNTIME**

60' / 75'

**LANGUAGE / SUBTITLES**

Arabic / French, English

**BUDGET / FINANCING NEEDED**

€ 172.802 / € 72.000

**MAIN PRODUCTION COMPANY**

L'image d'après

**CO-PRODUCTION COMPANY**

G Prod

**CURRENT STATUS OF PROJECT**

Editing

**FUNDS OR AWARDS RECEIVED**

CNC, Ciclic-Région Centre, Procirep-Angoa, Sacem, Scam, AFAC

**CREATIVE TEAM**

Leïla Chaïbi, *Director*  
Christine Bouteiller, *Editor*  
Nadir Moussaoui, *Music*  
Maud Martin, *Producer*

**DELEGATE PRODUCTION COMPANY**

L'image d'après

**MAIN CONTACT PERSON**

Maud Martin

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**DIRECTOR'S CONTACTS**

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Leïla Chaïbi,  
*Director*



Maud Martin,  
*Producer*

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**DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

The first time I met Hassan was in 2010. A friend of mine was visiting her brother's grave in Jellaz. Hassan showed up out of nowhere and came to talk to us. He knew my friend, as he tends to her family's grave site. We learned that he also knew the djinn that lives in the tree under which my friend and I sat.

I have gone back many times since. Each time, he opens the door to his tomb to me, and we spend hours talking about his life's story. He offered me a glimpse of a fantastic world, and an entirely new way of thinking. Endless questions about his particular life and also personal curiosities about my own life have kept me going back to see him.

The guiding questions that motivate me and will resonate with an audience are: What does one choose to do with one's time on earth? What's the meaning of our own existence?

How do we accept death? In times when society quantifies time to turn lives into profit, how can we pull ourselves out of the frenzied world and its forced march? When dogmas of religion, economy, or identity are imposed upon us as norms, how can we leave some space to doubt and have the freedom to choose? Do we all need our own version of faith?

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**DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY**

Leïla Chaïbi, born in 1982, initially a videojournalist, specialized in documentaries. After working several years as a cameraman for journalism (France O, Nesma (Tunisia), MBC Egypt...), she began working for cinema. She started as a cameraman for fiction and documentaries. From 2010, she developed her own film projects. Living in Tunis during few years, she is interested in the question of identity and arabic world. *La Brûlure*, her first short documentary, paints the portrait of illegal immigrants who disappeared at sea, became a medium-length film, *Tous brûlés*. *La Maison des hommes* is an inventory of prisons in Tunisia. She then co-directed *Le verrou*, a film about the magic ritual of the tasfih that aims to protect young girls from any penetration. *Gardien des mondes* is her third feature film.

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**DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY**

**2016 Le verrou** doc. feature (Hélène Poté, Co-director)

**2011 Tous brûlés** doc. feature

**2010 La Brûlure** doc. short

ALGERIA, FRANCE

# HADJER / L'OLIVERAIE

*HADJER / THE OLIVE GROVE*

ANIS DJAAD



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## SYNOPSIS

In a remote Algerian village Hadjer, the widow of a policeman killed during the black decade, supports herself and their adolescent son, Djamil, by being a cleaning lady in a nearby town hall. Djamil is an olive picker in the nearby grove. A nasty rumor of an affair with her superior forces Hadjer and Djamil, after a fight with villagers, to flee to the next city. There, they are greeted by Hadjer's co-worker, Fatma and her husband Mohamed. Finding difficulties to find work, Hadjer and Djamil do what they can to make ends meet. Being harassed by the owner of the slum they live in, they have to flee again. They arrive at the coast and are greeted by Kadder, a small hotel owner, who gives them some work too. While Hadjer settles and starts a friendly relationship with Kadder, Djamil discovers the first love. When he is betrayed, he tries to leave the country by boat with Fateh. When she realizes it, Hadjer is devastated.

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## LOG-LINE

In a remote village of Algeria, after that a rumor spreads about her, Hadjer is forced to flee with her son Djamil. This is the beginning of a tormented survival. She will have to fight to protect herself and her son from the city's crooks.

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**NEED TO COMPLETE THE FILM**

Color grading, sound mixing, English or French subtitles, Master DCP, marketing, publicity and distribution, SPFX.

**GENRE**

Fiction

**CURRENT RUNTIME / ESTIMATED RUNTIME**

104' / 105'

**LANGUAGE / SUBTITLES**

Algerian / English, French

**BUDGET / FINANCING NEEDED**

€ 626.005 / € 70.000

**MAIN PRODUCTION COMPANY**

Alegria Production

**CO-PRODUCTION COMPANY**

Praxis Films

**PARTNERS ATTACHED**

Praxis Films

**CURRENT STATUS OF PROJECT**

Rough cut

**FUNDS OR AWARDS RECEIVED**

CNC Cinema du Monde

**CREATIVE TEAM**

Anis Djaad, *Director*

Ahmed Talantikite, *Cinematographer*

Valérie Pico, *Editor*

Nicolas Boutruche, *Special Effects*

Lydia Larini, Belmoumane Ahmed,

Djamel Barek, Samir El Hakim, *Main Cast*

Moncef Delici, *Producer*

**DELEGATE PRODUCTION COMPANY**

Alegria Production

**MAIN CONTACT PERSON**

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**DIRECTOR'S CONTACTS**

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Anis Djaad,  
*Director*



Moncef Delici,  
*Producer*

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**DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

This project is the violent break between the traditional rural environment and the modern coastline and all its temptations, which Djamil will be paying for, moving away and deteriorating his relationship with his mother. Our two characters will have to adapt to this new world. Beyond the mother-to-son relationship, each of our characters has their own path and lives the misery that affects them differently but with the same violence. The aim of *Hadjer* is not to denounce or make a trial of the evils of modern Algerian society. The situations and events that our protagonists go through define them and they have to try to overcome or suffer them. The strong themes that form the narrative put our characters in front of unexpected moments that bring out their most intimate feelings. *Hadjer* has a very intimate footprint, especially since the scenes are in a very simple settings. *Hadjer* has also a sober atmosphere, like its characters, even if each one of them has a complex psychology due to the conflicting relationships between them.

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**DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY**

Anis Djaad was born in April 29, 1974 in Algiers and studied in the district of Bab El Oued. He discovered cinema in 1996 on a first shoot as an intern. In 2003, he won a screenplay competition at Algerian Year of Culture in France. In 2006, his first feature film script *At the end of the tunnel* was selected by the European program Meda film. Starting from 2007 and for two years, he worked as a columnist for the national daily *La Tribune*. In 2009 he published his first novel *Matins Parisiens* by Le Manuscrit, followed the year later by his second novel, *The Odor of the Violin*. In 2011, *The Porthole*, won the prize for the best short film script at the Algiers Cinematographic Days. In 2012, *The Porthole* won several prizes at international festivals. In 2013, he participated a second time in the national script competition and won the grand prize with *Black screen*. In 2014, he directed his second short film *Railroad crossing*, already present in ten official selections at various international festivals. In 2015, he directed his third short film *Keltoum's journey* with the support of the Mission cinema of the city of Paris.

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**DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY**

**2016** *Keltoum's journey* fict. short

**2014** *Railroad crossing* fict. short

**2012** *The Porthole* fict. short

FRANCE, LEBANON,  
BELGIUM, QATAR, USA

# JANA HARVEST

ELY DAGHER



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## SYNOPSIS

It's pitch dark in the middle of the night as Jana, a 26-year-old woman, makes her way alone from Beirut airport back to her parents' home in the suburbs of the city. She has returned, unexpectedly. Jana finds herself in a familiar yet quite strange environment after having been abroad and out of touch for a while. Vulnerable to the outside world, and haunted by the pressure to fit in, she retreats into herself until she is left with no choice but to fully immerse herself into the city she was once so eager to leave.

Her insecurities about her past and future push her to reconnect with the life she had abandoned with her longtime refuge, Adam. She tries to come to terms with herself against a backdrop of Beirut - where dreams and the harsh realities of a conflicted city continuously mix and merge.

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## LOG-LINE

Jana makes her way back to her parents' home in the middle of the night. She has returned unexpectedly after having been abroad and out of touch for a while. She finds herself in a familiar yet strange environment with no choice but to fully immerse herself into the city she was once eager to leave.

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**NEED TO COMPLETE THE FILM**

Subtitling, DCP, VFX, original score recording, editing, color grading, sound mixing.

**GENRE**

Fiction

**CURRENT RUNTIME / ESTIMATED RUNTIME**

120' / 110'

**LANGUAGE / SUBTITLES**

Arabic / English

**BUDGET / FINANCING NEEDED**

€ 709.546 / € 177.724

**MAIN PRODUCTION COMPANY**

Andolfi

**CO-PRODUCTION COMPANIES**

About Productions, Wrong Men, BeachSide Films. International World Sales: The Party Film Sales, MENA: MAD Distribution

**CURRENT STATUS OF PROJECT**

Editing

**FUNDS OR AWARDS RECEIVED**

Procirep Angoa Development Fund, Hubert Bals Fund, Doha Film Institute, The Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC), Cinegouna Development Prize, Bassita Prize at Cinegouna Development Platform

**CREATIVE TEAM**

Ely Dagher, *Director*

Shadi Chaaban, *Cinematographer*

Léa Masson, *Editor*

Sabine Sabbagh, *Set Designer*

Lara Mae Khamis, *Costume Designer*

Matthew Wilcock (Zelig Sound), *Music*

Rana Eid, *Sound*

Manal Issa, Roger Azar, Yara Abou Haidar,

Rabih El Zaher, *Main Cast*

Arnaud Dommerc, *Producer*

**DELEGATE PRODUCTION COMPANY**

Andolfi

**MAIN CONTACT PERSON**

Arnaud Dommerc

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**DIRECTOR'S CONTACTS**

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Ely Dagher,  
*Director*



Arnaud Dommerc,  
*Producer*

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**DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

Growing up in Beirut at the end of the civil war and the years after, I have lived the rollercoaster that the Lebanese society went through. Unfortunately the war never really ended and instead, a ceasefire was put in place and the same militiamen and parties turned to politics. It became a new warfare of politics and corruption.

With continued local and regional turmoil, the country has been stripped bare. Since few months, Lebanon is going through a huge economic crisis plunging families into destitution. All this pushed almost 1/4 of the population to leave the country since the mid 90's with dreams of a better life. I myself lived this when I traveled to pursue my studies. Some stay abroad but a lot do come back. Sometimes we come back by choice because we have this deep attachment to the country but other times simply because we find out that the grass is not always greener on the other side. Out of options we come back lost, in a broken state.

In *Harvest* we follow Jana's first few days as she returns home after years struggling to live a fulfilled life in Paris. Through her we draw a portrait of youth, of a generation and ultimately the story of Beirut.

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**DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY**

Ely Dagher is an artist/filmmaker working with different media and producing work that intertwines on different levels. His work focuses on the layering and constructing of multiple narratives across film, painting and installation. Drawing from his upbringing in Lebanon and his current situation, his work explores the correlation and possibilities created through the play between cultures, histories and fiction. Ely's artworks function as an extension to his interrogations, juggling between different points of identification and visual structures, from surrealism, science fiction and the occult. His latest short film *Waves '98* (2015) was awarded the short film Palme D'Or at the 68th Cannes Film Festival. His films have been awarded at numerous international film festivals.

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**DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY**

**2015** *Waves '98* animated short

**2012** *Barrad May* fict. short

**2007** *Beirut* animated short

ALGERIA, FRANCE

# SOULA

SALAH ISSAAD



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## SYNOPSIS

Soula, a young single mother, is rejected by her family in the name of honor. Having nowhere to go when her father throws her out of her home, she calls upon many friends and relatives for help. As she embarks on a tumultuous 24 hours long journey, Soula's sole goal is to spare her baby daughter her pain and struggles. But everything and everyone around her represents a potential threat and the line is often blurry between those who want to help her and those who pull her further into a spiral of violence. From Batna to Annaba, the young woman hops from one car to another swaying in between moments of exhilarating relief and banality with friends and moments of great angst and solitude. Against a backdrop of soothing landscapes, in a dystopic yet breathtaking road trip, Soula heads towards her inevitable destiny.

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## LOG-LINE

Soula, a young single mother, is rejected by her family in the name of honor. Trying to survive, she finds herself caught up in a spiral of violence. Along the roads of Algeria and through unfortunate encounters in a stunning journey, she heads towards her inevitable destiny.

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**NEED TO COMPLETE THE FILM**

Color grading, sound mixing, English or French subtitles, Master DCP, marketing, publicity and distribution.

**GENRE**

Fiction

**CURRENT RUNTIME / ESTIMATED RUNTIME**

89' / 89'

**LANGUAGE / SUBTITLES**

Arabic / English

**BUDGET / FINANCING NEEDED**

€ 250.000 / € 50.000

**MAIN PRODUCTION COMPANY**

Issaad Film Productions

**CURRENT STATUS OF PROJECT**

Rough cut

**CREATIVE TEAM**

Salah Issaad, *Director, Screenplay and Producer*  
Soula Bahri, *Screenplay and Main Cast*  
Kevin Zaouali, *Art Director*  
Arthur Fanget, *Cinematographer*  
Salah Issaad, *Editor*  
Myriam Guyenard, *Set Designer*  
Carole Beauruel, *Costume Designer*  
Nicolas Montaigne, *Music*  
Jonas Braasch, *Sound*

**DELEGATE PRODUCTION COMPANY**

Issaad Film Productions

**MAIN CONTACT PERSON**

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**DIRECTOR'S CONTACTS**

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Salah Issaad,  
*Director and Producer*

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**DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

Soula is a story, a tragedy, a road movie, a character but also a friend. Soula Bahri plays her own character, it is her first experience as an actress. The movie is inspired by true events, some of them I witnessed. That's why I decided to write the script with Soula's help. I know Soula's story. I witnessed some of the horrible things she went through growing up as a single mother still underaged. I felt it was important to tell her story. As a matter of fact, it is not just about her. It is about all these women, single mothers, but also married or divorced women who are rejected, abused and isolated by their families out of shame and social pressure. My intention is to show the world what some women endure on a daily basis because of social construction.

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**DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY**

Born in 1989 in Arris in Algeria, to an Algerian mother and Tunisian father, Salah Issaad was raised in a family of publishers. After a baccalaureate in letters and foreign languages in 2008, he entered the law school of Batna in Algeria, then emigrated to France where he studied film studies for two years at the University of Paris VIII. Alternating professional life and studies, he joined the ARFIS audiovisual school in Lyon, then he ended up joining the Factory school in Villeurbanne where he obtained his Cinema director diploma. He has made a feature film and several short films. He has always been pushed by the passion of telling stories where human relationships are honored. He explores different narrative forms and different film genres like drama, tragedy, stories inspired by real facts, and comedy.

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**DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY**

**2020 Je suis Cyrano** fict. short

**2018 Zizou sur Mars** fict. short

**2017 Dîner sous les étoiles** fict. short

**2017 Je suis Cendrillon de Damas** fict. short

LEBANON

# THE BLUE INMATES

ZEINA DACCACHE



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## SYNOPSIS

From Lebanon's notoriously tough Roumieh prison, Daccache's third carceral cultural production emerges shedding the light on inmates suffering from mental illness with the fate of staying in prison forever. Indeed, the Lebanese penal code states that "insane" offenders should be incarcerated in a special psychiatry unit until evidence of "cured from insanity"(whereas mental illness can be managed with proper treatment and not "cured"). In the film, Daccache involves "regular" inmates to represent in a theatre production the stories of the inmates suffering from mental illness and convey their messages to the outside world (as the ones suffering from mental illness cannot represent their own stories on stage). The current project pushes the government to improve Mental Health in Lebanese Prisons and reform the law for mentally ill inmates, hopefully changing the lives of many forgotten persons behind bars - - and preventing a similar "life sentence" fate for future inmates.

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## LOG-LINE

The Lebanese Penal Code stipulates that "Insane" offenders shall be incarcerated until "Being Cured".The film portrays these offenders' stories through the eyes of "normal" inmates in Roumieh Prison who took the roles in a theatre play of their fellow mentally ill inmates residing in the same prison.

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**NEED TO COMPLETE THE FILM**

Color grading, English or French subtitles, Master DCP, marketing, publicity and distribution.

**GENRE**

Documentary

**CURRENT RUNTIME / ESTIMATED RUNTIME**

76' / 76'

**LANGUAGE / SUBTITLES**

Arabic / English

**BUDGET / FINANCING NEEDED**

approx. € 90.000 / approx. € 11.000

**MAIN PRODUCTION COMPANY**

Catharsis-Lebanese Center for Drama Therapy

**CURRENT STATUS OF PROJECT**

Fine cut

**FUNDS OR AWARDS RECEIVED**

Agnes Varis trust for shooting and part of editing

**CREATIVE TEAM**

Zeina Daccache, *Screenplay and Producer*  
Karim Ghorayeb, *Cinematographer*  
Myriam Geagea, *Editor*  
Andrea Salvadori, *Music*  
Raed Younan, *Sound*  
inmates from Roumieh Prison, *Main Cast*

**DELEGATE PRODUCTION COMPANY**

Catharsis-Lebanese Center for Drama Therapy

**MAIN CONTACT PERSON**

Zeina Daccache

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Zeina Daccache,  
Director and Producer

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**DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

This is the 3rd feature documentary I do about Lebanese prisons. Both first projects have had a lot of success as eye opener on this international matter and in reforming prisons and the judiciary system in Lebanon. It was after *12 Angry Lebanese* the film produced in 2009 in Roumieh Prison, that a 2002 law to reduce prison sentences for good behavior was finally implemented. *Scheherazade* project in the female prison of Baabda in 2012, shed light and lobbied for the passing of a law against domestic violence - while the current project portrays the awful situation of mentally ill offenders and pushes to improve Mental Health condition in Prisons hopefully changing the lives of many forgotten persons behind bars and preventing a similar "life sentence" fate for future inmates.

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**DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY**

Zeina Daccache (Film Director, Play Director, Drama Therapist). Zeina produced the pioneering artistic production *12 Angry Lebanese* with inmates of Roumieh Prison in 2009. This pioneering production as well as the documentary that emerged from the process received international acclaim (8 Awards) and led to the implementation of Law 463 in 2009 (the reduction of sentences for good behavior). In 2013, she created the play *Scheherazade in Baabda*, with women inmates of Baabda prison where they shared their personal stories in an attempt to heal their wounds and hold up a mirror to Lebanese society about the oppression of women. Her 2nd feature documentary *Scheherazade's Diary* wins 10 international awards.

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**DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY**

**2013** *Scheherazade's Diary* doc. feature  
**2009** *12 Angry Lebanese* doc. feature  
**2007** *Any* doc. short

Editorial Coordination  
**La Biennale di Venezia**  
**Editorial Activities and Web**  
**and Venice Production Bridge**

Design  
**Leonardo Maraner (Headline)**

Layout  
**Riccardo Cavallaro**

**September 2020**





Market for selected projects

**labiennale.org**  
**veniceproductionbridge.org**