



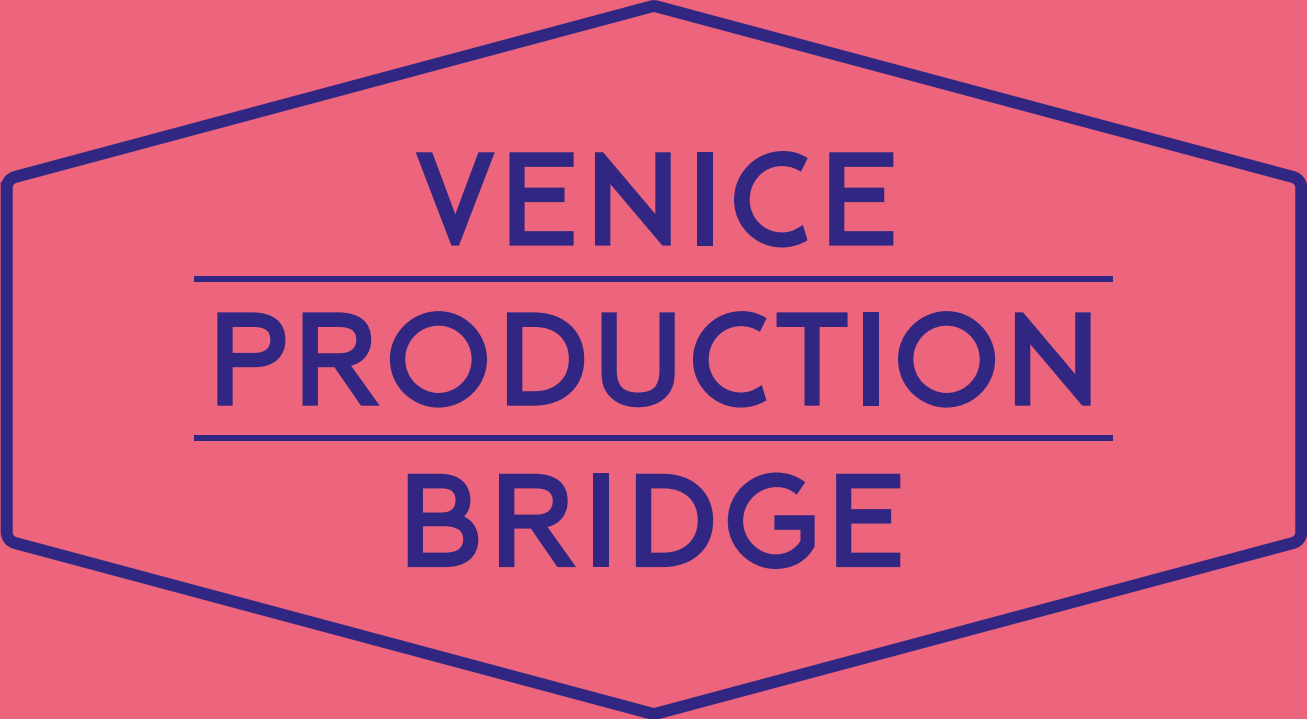
La Biennale di Venezia

Arte
Architettura
Cinema
Danza
Musica
Teatro
Archivio Storico

FINAL CUT IN VENICE

VENICE
PRODUCTION
BRIDGE

VENICE
6—8.09.2026





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La Biennale di Venezia
Director General
Andrea Del Mercato

Artistic Director
of the Cinema Department
Alberto Barbera

Venice Production Bridge
Pascal Diot
Savina Neirotti

vpboffice@labiennale.org
labiennale.org
veniceproductionbridge.org

Final Cut in Venice
Alessandra Speciale

With the kind support of
Thierry Lenouvel
Gaëlle Genet

La Biennale di Venezia
and its collaborators for
Final Cut in Venice
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The Final Cut in Venice 2026 brochure was compiled with the information available as of July 21st, 2026.
The Venice Production Bridge cannot be held responsible for any possible inaccuracies.
An updated version, including the daily schedule, will be sent out during the first week of August

FINAL CUT IN VENICE 14TH EDITION

A programme to support films in post-production from all African countries and six countries in Middle East: Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Yemen. 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.

Six work-in-progress films from different geographical and cultural areas will be presented on 6th and 7th September. Access is reserved exclusively to Gold and Trade badge holders. The one-to-one meeting session between the selected projects and the professionals attending the Venice Production Bridge will be organized on September 8th.

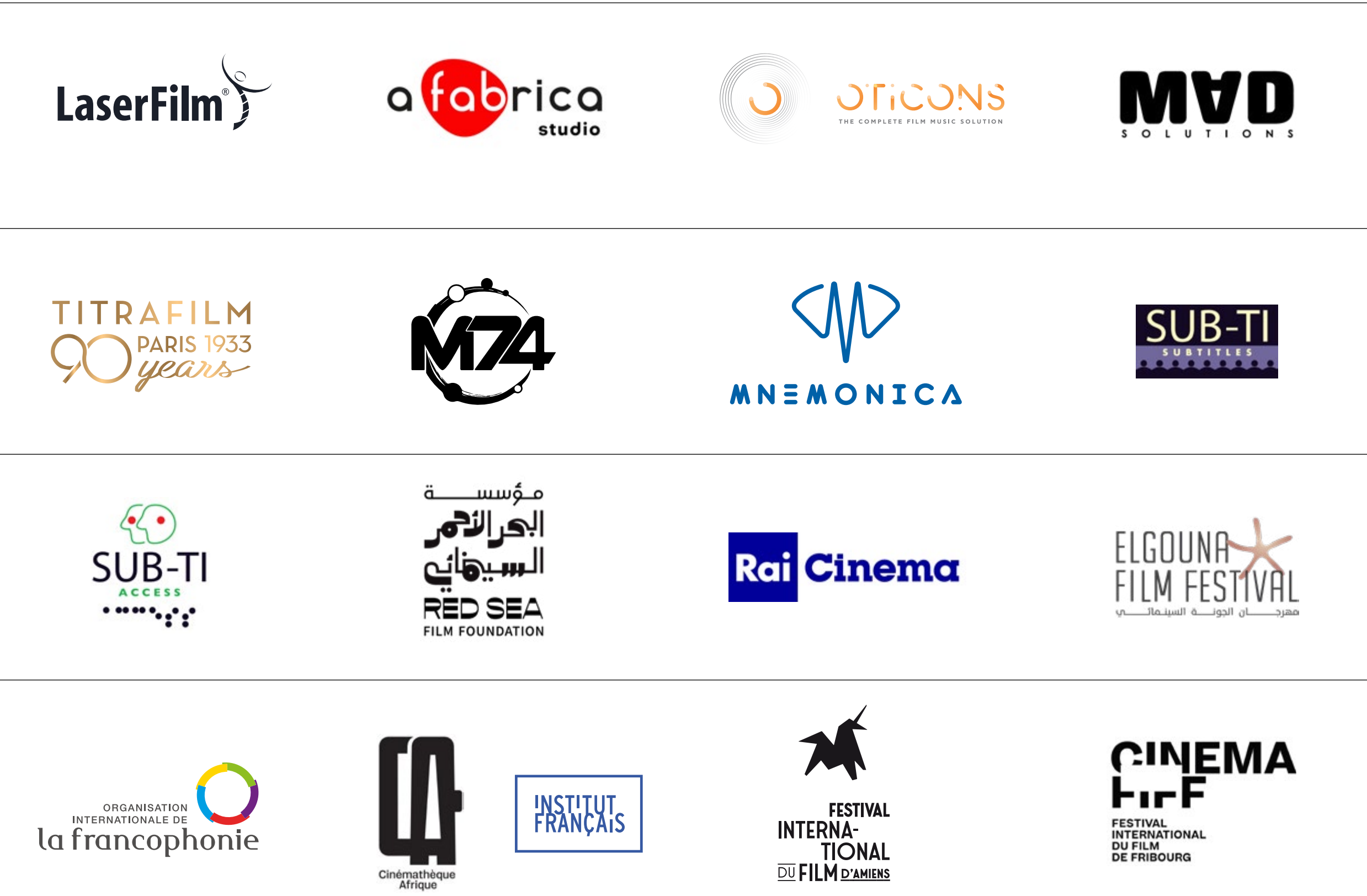
Final Cut in Venice will conclude with the awarding of prizes in kind or in cash, the purpose of which is to provide economic support for the post-production phase of the films. On the occasion of the **tenth year, La Biennale di Venezia** will give a prize of € 10.000 to the best film in post-production. 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, with Final Cut in Venice supporters.

The prizes are:

- € 15.000 for the colour correction of a feature-length film offered by **Laser Film** (Rome) for up to 50 hours of work (technician included);
- € 15.000 offered by **Studio A Fabrica** (Ajaccio) for the sound mixing of a feature length film (up to 12 days of work, sound mixer not included);
- **Oticons** will offer tailored film music services to one of the films, in the form of either music consulting, and/or music supervision and/or the production of an original score by one of our represented film composers. These services, valued at up to €10.000, will encompass all relevant processes, such as spotting sessions, composition, mock-ups and final production (for original score), or expert support in music licensing and supervision (if applicable).
- For a feature-length fiction film, a MG of minimum \$10.000, or for a feature-length documentary film, a MG of minimum \$3.000 in marketing, advertising, and distribution worldwide, offered by **MAD Solutions** for an Arabic project (with the exception of projects already under MAD Solutions’ responsibility).
- **Titra Film** (Paris) will offer up to € 5.000 for colour-grading; up to € 3.000 for the production of a DCP master, or the creation of i-Tunes, Google or Netflix files; up to € 2.000 for French or English subtitles (translation not included);
- up to € 10.000 for digital visual effects “2D Comp” offered by **M74 srl** (Rome)
- **Mnemonica** will provide full access to its secure cloud-based platform to manage, preserve, share and distribute the digital assets of the winning film, to a value of € 10.000.
- up to € 7.500 for the creation of the DCP master with 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, including audio subtitles in voiceover, in Italian or English (the subtitles and the audio-described soundtrack for the DCP will be provided) offered by **Sub-Ti Access Srl** (Turin).
- € 5.000 offered by **Red Sea Fund** (Red Sea Film Foundation);
- € 5.000 by **Rai Cinema** for a first negotiation right for the acquisition of Free TV exploitation rights in the Italian territory and obligation to mention “in collaboration with Rai Cinema S.p.a.” in the credits of the work;
- \$ 5.000 awarded to an Arab project offered by the **El Gouna Film Festival** and an invitation to participate in the industry platform CineGouna;
- € 5.000 offered by **Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie** (OIF) as a refund for post-production services – delivered by companies based in one of the countries eligible to the OIF Supporting Fund (Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Ivory Coast, Lebanon, Madagascar, Morocco, Mauritius, Mauritania, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Togo, and Tunisia) – of a feature-length film directed by a filmmaker from one of the OIF Supporting Fund countries and produced or co-produced by a company based in one of the OIF Supporting Fund countries;
- “Coup de cœur de la Cinémathèque Afrique” Prize, offered by **Cinémathèque Afrique of the Institut français** (Paris). The prize consists in the acquisition of the non-commercial and non-exclusive broadcasting rights for 5 years for a value of € 4.000 – € 6.000 depending on the genre and length of the film and the number of available territories;
- 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 du Film de Fribourg**.

For the fifth year in a row, the FCV program will benefit of the additional support of the **Red Sea Film Foundation** within our supporters.



THE VENICE PRODUCTION BRIDGE WELCOMES THE 6 SELECTED WORK-IN-PROGRESS FILMS TO THE 14TH EDITION OF FINAL CUT IN VENICE

Since its launch in 2013, this industry programme of the Venice Production Bridge continues to provide tangible support to films in post-production from the African continent and from six countries in the Middle East (Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Yemen), while also fostering connections between filmmakers and the international film industry. Set within the prestigious framework of the Venice International Film Festival and the Venice Production Bridge, the programme offers a **unique opportunity to build relationships among filmmakers, industry professionals and international partners**.

Over the years, Final Cut in Venice has helped bring visibility to directors from film industries whose richness and creative vitality are not always adequately represented.

The programme is distinguished by its collaborative atmosphere, enabling festival programmers, sales agents, distributors and other industry professionals to engage with films while they are still works in progress and to follow their development closely.

The achievements of past editions clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of this process.

This year alone, several films supported by Final Cut in Venice have gone on to major international festivals. *My Semba* and *The Prophet*, the debut features by Hugo Salvaterra and Ique Langa, were selected for the Tiger Competition at the 2026 International Film Festival Rotterdam. Two other debut features premiered at the 2026 Cannes Film Festival: *The Station* by Sara Ishaq, the first Yemeni feature film directed by a woman, in La Semaine de la Critique, and *Yesterday the Eye Didn't Sleep* by Rakan Mayasi in Un Certain Regard. The documentary *Atcha Atcha* (aka *Legacy*) by Mamadou Dia was selected for the 2026 Locarno Film Festival. They are joined by *House of the Wind* by Auguste Bernard Kouemo Yanghu, selected for the Orizzonti Competition at the 83rd Venice International Film Festival.

As I like to point out every year in this introduction, Final Cut in Venice also serves as a privileged observatory of film production across these regions. For this edition, we received **83 works in progress**, compared to 78 last year and 52 in 2024—a steady increase that reflects the continued growth of film production in these territories.

One particularly significant aspect of this year's selection is the **remarkable quality and number of fiction films submitted**. For the first time in the programme's history, we have chosen to devote the entire selection to fiction features, a decision inspired by the exceptional standard of the projects received. Never in the previous thirteen editions have we faced such a competitive selection process. All the selected films have recently completed shooting, and their first images will be presented for the first time within an industry programme. Another important milestone is the inclusion, for the first time in the history of Final Cut in Venice, of a film from Ethiopia.

The 2026 Final Cut in Venice **line-up therefore comprises six feature films in post-production**. The selection is based first and foremost on the artistic quality and originality of the works, while also seeking to reflect the richness and diversity of the film cultures represented by showcasing a variety of cinematic languages, styles and cultural perspectives, with continued attention to gender balance. This fourteenth edition features films by directors from, or originally from, **Algeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia**.

On 6th and 7th September, at the Sala Pasinetti on the Venice Lido, the six selected films will be presented as rough cuts or assemblies of sequences. Five are directed by filmmakers making their second feature—**Alaa Eddine Aljem, Machérie Ekwa Bahango, Youssef Chebbi, Sofia Djama and Bassel Ghandour**—while the sixth is the third feature by **Abraham Gezahagne**, who, after a long career in television, embarks with this project on a work of full cinematic ambition.

We are delighted to renew our collaboration with our partners, whose continued support remains essential to the programme's success. Our sincere thanks go to **Red Sea Film Foundation, Laser Film, A Fabrica, Oticons, MAD Solutions, TitraFilm, M74 srl, Mnemonica, Sub-Ti Ltd, Sub-Ti Access Srl, Rai Cinema, El Gouna Film Festival, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, Cinémathèque Afrique / Institut français, Festival International du Film d'Amiens** and **Festival International de Films de Fribourg**.

We are pleased to invite you to the screenings of the selected films, which will be followed by one-to-one meetings with the directors and producers, as well as the awards ceremony (on 8th September).

This will be an opportunity to discover the latest productions from these regions in preview and to engage directly with their creators, gaining a deeper understanding not only of the films themselves but also of the cultural and production contexts from which they emerge.

Alessandra Speciale
Curator of Final Cut in Venice

We extend our special thanks for their collaboration go to the Festival of African, Asian and Latin American Cinema of Milan and the Doha Film Institute.

PALAZZO DEL CINEMA
SALA PASINETTI

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

9:30
Introduction and opening remarks
by Alberto Barbera, Artistic Director
of the **83nd Venice International Film Festival**

9:45
**A QUARTER TO THURSDAY
(JEUDI MOINS LE QUART)**
(France, Belgium, Algeria)
52’ (out of 90’ expected)
DIRECTOR Sofia Djama
PRODUCTION Tessalit Productions, FuryoFilms ,
Artemis Productions, Zoudj Doro Production
GENRE Fiction
LOGLINE Once upon a time, in an imaginary
country where presidents never die, there were
three friends, three bumbling idiots: Goussam,
Cherifa Griffa, Riad and a dead Jack Russel named
Trump. Goussam, a young woman with lungs full
of hope and a plump bottom, is pregnant.
Q&A
Gold and Trade accreditations only.

11:00
MADI MAKAMBU
(Congo Dr, France, Belgium)
58’ (out of 91’ expected)
DIRECTOR Machérie Ekwa Bahango
PRODUCTION CL1 D’oeil Studio, Boucan Films
GENRE Fiction
LOGLINE The lives of the two lovers, Madi and
Djino, take a dramatic turn when Madi gives birth
to a child Djino is not the father of, after
experiencing a denied pregnancy. Though she
doesn’t want to care for the baby, she is forced to
confront her past.
Q&A
Gold and Trade accreditations only.

14:30
MEHAL SEFARI
(Ethiopia, Canada, Germany, Netherlands,
Norway, Saudi Arabia)
100’ rough cut
DIRECTOR Abraham Gezahagne
PRODUCTION Gobez Media Inc.,
Abricom Multimedia, Barents Film,
2Pilots, New Amsterdam
GENRE Fiction
LOGLINE Tilahun, a politically apathetic
ambulance driver, collects bodies from the streets
of Ethiopia’s capital, Addis Ababa, during a mass
killing in 1977. He is forced to choose a side when
he finds his son’s body.
Q&A
Gold and Trade accreditations only.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

10:00
**PLAGUE
(BALAA)**
(Tunisia, France, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia)
61’ (out of 105’ expected)
DIRECTOR Youssef Chebbi
PRODUCTION Supernova films, Blast Films,
Portobisso
GENRE Fiction
LOGLINE A farming town lost at the gates of the
Tunisian desert. Zied and Ali are twin brothers,
they are in charge of a palm grove. While Zied
plans to marry Hana, Ali lives from day to day.
But everything changes when Ali discovers a red
palm-eating insect: the weevil.
Q&A
Gold and Trade accreditations only.

11:30
**ELDORADO, THE TASTE OF THE SOUTH
(ELDORADO, LE GOÛT DU SUD)**
(Morocco, France, Italy, Norway)
47’ (out of 100’ expected)
DIRECTOR Alaa Eddine Aljem
PRODUCTION Le Moindre Geste, Haut Les Mains
Productions, Dugong Films, Jacaranda
Productions, Duo Film
GENRE Fiction
LOGLINE A group of migrants seeks to reach
Eldorado, a secret utopian island where everyone
lives in peace – and eventually ends up in a factory
of the same name that produces tomato sauce.
Q&A
Gold and Trade accreditations only.

14:45
**OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS
(AL IHTILAL WA AL HAL)**
(Jordan, Qatar, United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia,
Palestine)
60’ (out of 100’ expected)
DIRECTOR Bassel Ghandour
PRODUCTION The Imaginarium Films, Tough
Crowd, Cocoon Films, Metafora Productions
GENRE Fiction
LOGLINE A dark comedy about a family in
Jerusalem who fight to keep their home from
crumbling – literally and figuratively – as their
struggle against the system takes on wild and
unorthodox forms.
Q&A
Gold and Trade accreditations only.

HOTEL EXCELSIOR 3° FLOOR
FOYER

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 8, 2026
9:30-13:00 / 14:30-16:30

One-to-one meetings with the 6 selected projects to find funding, distribution possibilities, and festival selection. Industry delegates (Gold and Trade) will be able to schedule the meetings via the FCV area on the VPB website.
www.veniceproductionbridge.org
<https://veniceproductionbridge.org/final-cut-venice>

FRANCE, BELGIUM, ALGERIA

A QUARTER TO THURSDAY

JEUDI MOINS LE QUART

SOFIA DJAMA



SYNOPSIS

In a country where presidents never die, Goussam finds herself unexpectedly pregnant and determined to abort. Accompanied by Riad, a cynical middle-aged illustrator, and Cherifa, an extravagant cabaret performer, she navigates a crumbling healthcare system, corrupt doctors, and black-market medication, as the city trembles on the edge of uprising. What begins as an urgent, practical mission spirals into a series of darkly comic misadventures: an expired abortion pill, a jailed doctor, a depressed Soviet gynecologist with a collection of formaldehyde fetuses, and a nocturnal infiltration of a military base to bury a Jack Russel named Trump. Beneath the absurdity runs a sharp political undercurrent: the same authoritarian machine that stages fake popular support and surveils its citizens also decides what women can do with their bodies. The film traces an unlikely friendship in full, tender, unsparing detail, against a backdrop where the personal and the political are inseparable, and where even a dog’s burial becomes, somehow, an act of resistance...

LOGLINE

Once upon a time, in an imaginary country where presidents never die, there were three friends, three bumbling idiots: Goussam, Cherifa Griffa, Riad and a dead Jack Russel named Trump. Goussam, a young woman with lungs full of hope and a plump bottom, is pregnant.



Sofia Djama,
*Director
and Screenwriter*



Emma Binet,
Co-Producer

NEED TO COMPLETE THE FILM English or French subtitles, master DCP, deliveries	MAIN PRODUCTION COMPANY Tessalit Productions	CREATIVE TEAM Sofia Djama, <i>Director and Screenwriter</i> Pierre Aîm, <i>DoP</i> Sophie Reine, <i>Editor</i> Issam Krimi, <i>Music</i> Zita Hanrot, Gregory Montel, Hadjar Benmansour, Faouzi Bensaïdi, <i>Main Cast</i> Lilli-Jeanne Benente, <i>Set Designer</i> Morgane Tack, with the kind participation of Agnès B, <i>Costume Designer</i> Dirk Bombey, <i>Sound</i> David Gillain, <i>Sound Editing</i> Mehdi Djelil Bardi, <i>Illustration</i>	DELEGATE PRODUCTION COMPANY FuryoFilms
GENRE / SPECS Fiction / Color	CO-PRODUCTION COMPANIES FuryoFilms Artemis Productions Zoudj Doro Production		ADDRESS 3 passage Gustave Lepeu 75011 Paris
CURRENT TIME / ESTIMATED RUNTIME 52’ / 90’	CURRENT STATUS OF THE PROJECT Shooting		DIRECTOR’S CONTACTS Sofia Djama sofiadjama@gmail.com +33 620867886
LANGUAGE / SUBTITLES French, Arabic Algerian, Russian / English	SALES The Bureau Sales		PRODUCERS’ CONTACTS Jean Brehat jbrehat@tessalit.com
BUDGET / FINANCING NEEDED € 1.170.750 / € 90.000	FUNDS OR AWARDS RECEIVED CNC Avance sur recettes, Doha Film Institute, Institut Français d’Algérie, Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles, Sofitvcine		Emma Binet emma@furyofilms.com +33 668035454

DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT

When writing *A Quarter to Thursday*, I was thinking of Algiers, Marseille and Roma, not for what they are, but for what I wanted to make of them: my filmmaker’s playground. My film is a tale, a kind of fable, and for it to work, we need to invent an imaginary city where we lose ourselves, both geographically and temporally. The only identifiable thing is its “Mediterraneanness”, neither South nor North, neither East nor West, only this azure blue basin with turbulent shores that bind us inseparably through our shared history.

My three characters are all in their forties, shaped by decades of civil war, corruption, and crushed hopes. They want to believe in the uprising shaking their city, but past failures have turned them into what I call “ultra-normalized” subjects, on the verge of nihilism. Disconnected from the upheavals around them, they seem incapable of prioritizing values and appear amoral and skeptical. From their point of view, the world is senseless, so they interact with it without seeking purpose or truth. Hence the absurd logic of burying a dachshund in a military barracks before dealing with an illegal abortion.

DIRECTOR’S BIOGRAPHY

Born in Oran in 1982, Sofia Djama is an Algerian screenwriter and director. In the early 2000s, after studying literature, she devoted herself first to writing. Algiers, where she lives, became the central focus of her work. In 2011, she directed her first short film, *Mollement, un samedi matin*, an adaptation of one of her own short stories. Encouraged by the awards it received, including two at the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival, she went on to write her first feature film, *The Blessed*, which had its world premiere at Venice in 2017 and introduced actress Lyna Khoudri to international audiences. The film was nominated for a César Award in 2018, and at the Prix Lumière and awarded at Dubai, Best film. Since then, Sofia Djama has continued developing ambitious projects at the intersection of political satire and intimate storytelling, with *A Quarter to Thursday* as her eagerly awaited second feature, supported by the CNC and the Doha Film Institute, French Institute and Fédération Wallonie Brussels in Belgium.

DIRECTOR’S FILMOGRAPHY

- 2017** **The Blessed** feature film
- 2012** **Mollement un samedi matin** short film

MOROCCO, FRANCE, ITALY, NORWAY

ELDORADO, THE TASTE OF THE SOUTH

ELDORADO, LE GOÛT DU SUD

ALAA EDDINE ALJEM



SYNOPSIS

Adama is part of a group of Sub-Saharan migrants who reach northern Morocco, waiting to cross the sea. They’ve heard whispers of Eldorado – a hidden island where a just, egalitarian society was built in secret, far from the rest of the world.

On the night of the crossing, a mix-up by the smuggler throws a second group into the boat: Moroccan migrants bound for a different route to Spain, led by the headstrong Ahmed, who forces his way aboard.

On arrival, they’re seized and taken to a “welcome center,” where the director, Franck, lays out the rules of this new society. Entry is scarce, and secrecy is sacred – so before anyone earns citizenship, they must spend twelve months at the center, working off the cost of their stay in the tomato sauce factory that bears the island’s name.

The Sub-Saharan group tries to disappear into the routine, hoping to prove themselves worthy. The Moroccans, who never asked for any of this, start plotting an escape instead. Tension rises between the two groups.

What neither of them knows is that there is no secret island. There is no Eldorado. They never even left Morocco. There is only a factory – and a workforce that costs nothing.

LOGLINE

A group of migrants seeks to reach Eldorado, a secret utopian island where everyone lives in peace – and eventually ends up in a factory of the same name that produces tomato sauce.



Alaa Eddine Aljem,
*Director
and Screenwriter*



Francesca Duca,
Producer

NEED TO COMPLETE THE FILM Editing, sound editing, mixing, color grading, music, VFX	MAIN PRODUCTION COMPANY Le Moindre Geste	CREATIVE TEAM Alaa Eddine Aljem, <i>Director and Screenwriter</i> Amine Messad, <i>DoP</i> Lilian Corbeille, <i>Editor</i> (Unconfirmed) Amine Bouhafa, <i>Music</i> (Unconfirmed) Alseni Bathily, Manon Clavel, Majd Mastoura, <i>Cast</i> Bassem Marzouk and Ouassel El Kilali, <i>Set Designer</i> Dana Schondelmeyer, <i>Costume Designer</i> Amine Arrom, <i>Sound</i> Idriss Fekkak, <i>Special Effects</i>	DELEGATE PRODUCTION COMPANY Le Moindre Geste
GENRE / SPECS Fiction / Color	CO-PRODUCTION COMPANIES Haut Les Mains Productions Dugong Films Jacaranda Productions Duo Film		ADDRESS 214 Boulevard Ibn Sina 20210 Casablanca Morocco
CURRENT TIME / ESTIMATED RUNTIME 47’ / 100’	CURRENT STATUS OF THE PROJECT Early Editing		DIRECTOR’S CONTACTS Alaa Eddine Aljem alaa.e.aljem@gmail.com +212 656343075
LANGUAGE / SUBTITLES French / English	SALES BFF - Best Friends Forever		PRODUCER’S CONTACTS Francesca Duca fra.duca@gmail.com +212 645429087
BUDGET / FINANCING NEEDED € 2.143.137 / € 90.000	FUNDS OR AWARDS RECEIVED Centre du Cinéma Marocain - Avance sur Recettes, Soread-2M, Sørfond, DFI, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, Red Sea Fund, Atelier de l’Atlas - Marrakech Film Festival, Ateliers de Tétouan - Festival de Cinéma Méditerranéen de Tétouan, Wouter Barendrecht Award - CineMart, CNC Mibact		

DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT

As a theme, credulity has interested me since I was making my first short films. When a person believes in something, their actions are imbued with sincerity and devotion. This means that someone who can make another believe in something can put them at their service. We live in an era when nothing makes sense – neither geography nor the rule of law nor history. We have lost all our reference points. This is a period that is conducive to manipulation. Capital has already made productive use of children, migrants and prisoners... but with each repeat, it wants more for less. It’s in the operating system; things cannot be otherwise. How do you ensure workers with low pay and no rights remain docile? The answer is simple. Sell them a dream. And we have been sold many, many dreams in the past.

DIRECTOR’S BIOGRAPHY

Alaa Eddine Aljem is a Moroccan filmmaker and screenwriter. He studied cinema at ESAV Marrakech, where he developed his artistic approach and directed his first short films, including *Le rituel* and *National Education*. After completing his studies, he continued his training at INSAS in Brussels and worked as a screenwriter, assistant director, and producer. His cinema explores themes of belief, human behavior, social structures, and the contradictions of contemporary society, often through a blend of satire, absurdity, and poetic realism. In 2019, he directed his first feature film, *The Unknown Saint*, which premiered at Cannes Critics’ Week and received international recognition. Through his films, Aljem examines the fragile relationship between individuals and the systems that shape their hopes, fears, and desires. He is also the founder of the production company Le Moindre Geste, dedicated to developing independent cinematic projects.

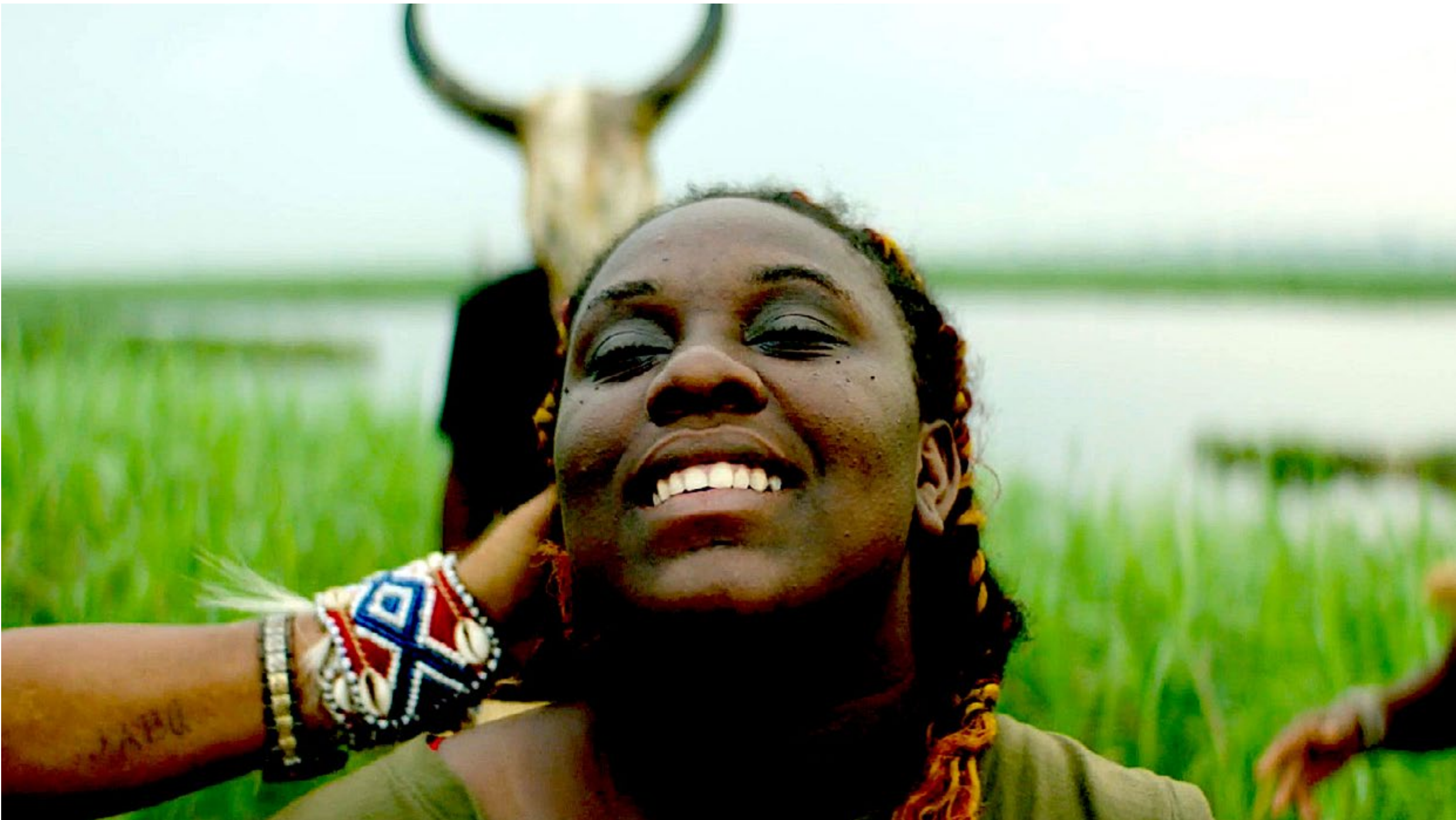
DIRECTOR’S FILMOGRAPHY

- | | |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2019 | The Unknown Saint feature film |
| 2015 | The Desert Fish short film |
| 2011 | Tribute short film |
| 2009 | National Education short film |
| 2008 | Le rituel short film |

CONGO DR, FRANCE, BELGIUM

MADI MAKAMBU

MACHÉRIE EKWA BAHANGO



SYNOPSIS

In Kinshasa, in one of the poorest neighborhoods, Pakadjuma, 17-year-old Madi and her boyfriend Djino, who have been together for a few months, are living out their great love story as they rebuild their lives from scratch. Just when things seem to be going well, the young couple’s life is turned upside down when Madi, unaware she is pregnant, gives birth to a child Djino is not the father of.

Having experienced a complete pregnancy denial and facing financial difficulties as well as postpartum depression, Madi denies this baby, refuses to care for it, and abandons it before leaving the hospital.

But when reality catches up with her and her maternal instinct resurfaces, the baby has vanished. It is the desperate search of a mother who embarks on a merciless race to find her baby. To Madi, this baby is her only path to redemption, a way to reconnect with her painful past.

LOGLINE

The lives of the two lovers, Madi and Djino, take a dramatic turn when Madi gives birth to a child Djino is not the father of, after experiencing a denied pregnancy. Though she doesn’t want to care for the baby, she is forced to confront her past.



Machérie Ekwa Bahango, *Director and Screenwriter*



Boris Van Gils, *Producer*

NEED TO COMPLETE THE FILM Editing, color grading, sound mixing, English or French subtitles, master DCP, marketing, publicity and distribution	MAIN PRODUCTION COMPANY CL1 D’oeil Studio	CREATIVE TEAM Machérie Ekwa Bahango, <i>Director and Screenwriter</i> Farouk Laaridh, <i>DoP</i> Marie-Hélène Dozo, <i>Editor</i> Benito Ekofa, Jonathan Buba, Lynnsha, Linda Ikwa, <i>Cast</i> Jordi Lwamba Mandombela, <i>Set Designer</i> Hamza Ouhbi, <i>Sound</i>	DELEGATE PRODUCTION COMPANIES CL1 D’oeil Studio Boucan Films
GENRE / SPECS Fiction / Color	CO-PRODUCTION COMPANY Boucan Films		ADDRESS n-1 Bis, Avenue Dialogue, Quartier Joli-Parc, Ngaliema DRC
CURRENT TIME / ESTIMATED RUNTIME 58’ / 91’	CURRENT STATUS OF THE PROJECT Editing		DIRECTOR’S CONTACTS Machérie Ekwa Bahango macherieekwa@gmail.com
LANGUAGE / SUBTITLES Lingala / English	FUNDS OR AWARDS RECEIVED OIF, DENTAAL		PRODUCERS’ CONTACTS Boris Van Gils borisvangils@gmail.com
BUDGET / FINANCING NEEDED € 688.759 / € 250.000			Michaël Goldberg michael@boucanfilms.com

DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT

Cinéma is my deepest expression. I made *Maki’la* with determination. Every film begins with a need to speak to the world.

Madi Makambu, my second feature, follows a young woman whose hidden pregnancy forces her to confront a past she can’t escape. In the DRC, where war has lasted over 25 years and rape is a weapon, poverty is extreme. Hidden pregnancies and postpartum depression are dismissed as witchcraft.

The film exposes systemic injustice: elites exploiting the poor, child trafficking in hospitals and orphanages. In Kinshasa, orphanages have been caught stealing children, yet these crimes vanish into silence.

Kinshasa’s problems are routine. Our slogan: “Every day, sleep, wake, new problem.” This is Madi’s life: always problems.

I use cinema to confront my society’s struggles. The DRC is rich but most live on less than \$1/day. A tiny elite dominates, manipulates, steals.

Madi Makambu is a social thriller, a story of resilience. It follows two young people rising above hardship. Despite war and poverty, Congolese people never stop dreaming. Their resilience inspires me to make films despite all odds.

A tribute to those who refuse to surrender. Love conquers all.

DIRECTOR’S BIOGRAPHY

Machérie, a self-taught Congolese director, has established herself as a major figure in African cinema. Her debut film *Maki’la* was selected for the 68th Berlin International Film Festival (Forum) in 2018, winning a jury prize. Screened at international festivals worldwide (Seattle, New York, BFI London, Carthage, Fespaco,...), it also won the Écran d’Or at the Écrans Noirs Festival. She was invited to the Cannes Film Festival in 2017 as a young African talent for a roundtable organized by the OIF and the Institut français.

In 2019, she directed *Sema*, an awareness-raising short film about sexual violence in the DRC for Dr. Denis Mukwege’s Panzi Foundation (2018 Nobel Peace Prize laureate). Selected at several American festivals, it won more than seven awards.

Currently in post-production on *Madi Makambu*, her second feature film, she has since 2019 developed the project *Zaïria*. This historical epic on the Congo, from the fall of Zaire to the rebellions, has benefited from writing residencies (Cannes Cinéfondation, Moulin d’Andé) and OIF support, participating in film markets (IFFR, Atlas, Red Sea Fundl...) and the Alaka Films Lab. *Zaïria* plans to begin production in late 2027.

DIRECTOR’S FILMOGRAPHY

- 2019 **Sema** short documentary
- 2018 **Maki’la** feature film

ETHIOPIA, CANADA, GERMANY, NETHERLANDS, NORWAY, SAUDI ARABIA

MEHAL SEFARI

ABRAHAM GEZAHAGNE



SYNOPSIS

Ethiopia in 1977 is under a brutal military regime. Thousands of suspected opposition supporters are executed and their bodies left in the streets as a warning. Mourning the dead is forbidden, and grieving relatives risk arrest. Tilahun, a widowed ambulance driver, has been reassigned from saving lives to collecting corpses destined for mass graves. Unable to leave his job, he warns his two teenage children to stay away from the growing resistance movement. His world collapses when he discovers the body of his sixteen year old son during a night shift. Tilahun is faced with the impossible choice of claiming his son’s body and exposing himself. He then uncovers his daughter’s secret involvement with the opposition and learns that her actions contributed to her brother’s death. Determined to give his son a proper burial and save his daughter, Tilahun devises a desperate escape plan. Amid a citywide uprising, he retrieves his son’s body and hides his daughter in the ambulance. But the plan fails, and both children are swallowed by the violence. Broken and alone, Tilahun attempts to take his own life. After an encounter with his daughter’s boyfriend, he begins to believe she may still be alive. For the first time, he chooses a side and uses his ambulance to help members of the resistance escape the city.

LOGLINE

Tilahun, a politically apathetic ambulance driver, collects bodies from the streets of Ethiopia’s capital, Addis Ababa, during a mass killing in 1977. He is forced to choose a side when he finds his son’s body.



Abraham Gezahagne,
Director and Screenwriter



Tamara Mariam Dawit,
Producer

NEED TO COMPLETE THE FILM Editing, color grading, sound mixing, master DCP, marketing	MAIN PRODUCTION COMPANY Gobez Media Inc. Abricom Multimedia	CREATIVE TEAM Abraham Gezahagne, <i>Director and Screenwriter</i> Gregg Telussa, <i>DoP</i> Mahi Rahgozar, <i>Editor</i> Abegasu Shiota <i>Music</i> Araya Mengesha, Girum Zenebe, Abebe Balcha, Tsedey Fantahun, <i>Cast</i> Theodros Mengesha, <i>Set Designer</i> Saron Wondafrash, <i>Costume Designer</i> Armin Badde, <i>Sound</i> Outside the Club, <i>Special Effects</i>	DELEGATE PRODUCTION COMPANY Gobez Media Inc.
GENRE / SPECS Fiction / Color	CO-PRODUCTION COMPANIES Barents Film 2Pilots New Amsterdam		ADDRESS 61 Scampton Drive K2W 1E7 Kanata Canada
CURRENT TIME / ESTIMATED RUNTIME 100’ / 100’	CURRENT STATUS OF THE PROJECT Fine Cut		DIRECTOR’S CONTACTS Abraham Gezahagne abram_gzn@yahoo.com +251 911130943
LANGUAGE / SUBTITLES Amharic / English	FUNDS OR AWARDS RECEIVED Red Sea Fund, DW Akademie, Film UndMedienstiftung NRW, Netherlands Film Fund, Netherlands Film Production Incentive, Sørfond		PRODUCER’S CONTACTS Tamara Mariam Dawit tamara@gobez.ca +251 966215415
BUDGET / FINANCING NEEDED € 1.000.701 / € 250.000			

DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT

My approach to *Mehal Sefari* is inspired by an Ethiopian proverb: “Those stuck in the middle will be shot by two bullets.”

Tilahun embodies this idea. Neither aligned with the ruling junta nor the opposition, he becomes a victim of both. Forced to choose between retrieving his son’s body and saving his daughter’s life, he is trapped between life and death, survival and sacrifice. His dilemma reflects the experience of countless ordinary people caught in political violence.

The film was inspired by research into the Red Terror trials, where I discovered that ambulance drivers were reassigned from saving lives to collecting corpses from the streets of Addis Ababa. This tragic reversal became the emotional foundation of the story.

Blending historical drama with psychological thriller elements, *Mehal Sefari* explores the human cost of political violence while examining the consequences of political polarization.

DIRECTOR’S BIOGRAPHY

Abraham Gezahagne is an acclaimed Ethiopian filmmaker, writer, and director whose work has played a pivotal role in shaping contemporary Ethiopian television and cinema. He holds a BA in Theatre Arts and an MA in Media and Communication from Addis Ababa University.

In 2011, he made history with *The Secret*, Ethiopia’s first episodic television drama, a groundbreaking 52 episode series that transformed the country’s television landscape and set a new standard for serialized storytelling. He followed this success with the feature films *The Scent of Lemon* (2012) and *I Will Not Bear Tomorrow* (2016), both of which received critical and commercial acclaim and earned him Best Script and Best Director awards at the Ethiopian Academy Awards.

Abraham later created and directed *Regrets* (2019), a gripping drama that ran for three successful seasons. In 2022, he launched the popular comedy series *Besintu*, now in its third season, followed by the sitcom *Zero Mewchaye* in 2025.

His contributions to Ethiopian arts and culture have been recognized with national awards from both the Prime Minister of Ethiopia and the Ministry of Culture.

DIRECTOR’S FILMOGRAPHY

- 2025** **Zero Mewchaye** series
- 2022** **Besintu** series
- 2019 – 2022** **Regrets** series
- 2016** **I Will Not Bear Tomorrow** feature film
- 2012** **The Scent of Lemon** feature film
- 2011** **The Secret** series

JORDAN, QATAR, UNITED KINGDOM, SAUDI ARABIA, PALESTINE

OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS

AL IHTILAL WA AL HAL

BASSEL GHANDOUR



SYNOPSIS

A Palestinian family in Jerusalem fights to keep their home from crumbling – literally and figuratively – as their struggle against the system takes on wild and unorthodox forms. Parents Hazem and Dima fight to hold their collapsing home, and live together. Ibtikar, Hazem’s mother, smuggles herself in from Ramallah with secret motives, stirring trouble. The youngest, 14-year old Yasmina, pranks settlers between homework. And Sultan? Well no matter what he does, trouble finds him. It’s almost like Israel is conspiring against him...
Oh wait – he’s a 19-year-old Palestinian male. It is.

LOGLINE

A dark comedy about a family in Jerusalem who fight to keep their home from crumbling – literally and figuratively – as their struggle against the system takes on wild and unorthodox forms.



Bassel Ghandour,
*Director and
Screenwriter*



Rula Nasser,
Producer

NEED TO COMPLETE THE FILM Finance, English or French subtitles, master DCP, marketing, publicity, distribution and festivals	MAIN PRODUCTION COMPANY The Imaginarium Films	CREATIVE TEAM Bassel Ghandour, <i>Director and Screenwriter</i> Justin Hamilton, <i>DoP</i> Zeina Abu Hosni, <i>Editor</i> Firas Abu Fakr, <i>Music</i> Hiam Abbas, Yumna Marwan, Daboor- Mohammad Karaki, Nabil Al Raee, Wardi Eilabouni, <i>Main Cast</i> Dima Srouji, <i>Set Designer</i> Phaedra Dahdaleh, <i>Costume Designer</i> Rana Eid, <i>Sound</i>	DELEGATE PRODUCTION COMPANY The Imaginarium Films
GENRE / SPECS Fiction / Color	CO-PRODUCTION COMPANIES Tough Crowd Cocoon Films Metafora Productions		ADDRESS Amman 11181 Jordan
CURRENT TIME / ESTIMATED RUNTIME 60’ / 100’	CURRENT STATUS OF THE PROJECT Early editing		DIRECTOR’S CONTACTS Bassel Ghandour Bassel.ghandour@gmail.com +962 795522623
LANGUAGE / SUBTITLES Arabic, Hebrew / English	FUNDS OR AWARDS RECEIVED JFF (Jordan Film Fund), Doha Film Fund, AFAC(Arab Fund for Arts and Culture), BFI development fund, Red Sea Fund		PRODUCER’S CONTACTS Rula Nasser Rula.nasser@gmail.com +962 795520056
BUDGET / FINANCING NEEDED € 1.700.000 / € 280.000			

DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT

I’m drawn to films that aren’t just stories, but voyages. This idea has shaped my own filmmaking ethos, to give audiences films that aren’t just viewed, but transported into and lived in. Numerous films that have inspired me, particularly jovial portrayals of families or communities which have a similar flavor of *Occupational Hazards*. Sorrentino’s *Hand of God*, Almodovar’s *All about My Mother* and *Volver*, these films are heartfelt and playful. With *Occupational Hazards* I wanted to do something similar, despite the painful reality of life for Palestinians. I wanted to explore the absurdity of the family’s situation, and more importantly, the wildly creative, mischievous, and ingenious ways Palestinians navigate daily life under occupation and apartheid. It’s through this lens that the film finds its darkly comic tone.

DIRECTOR’S BIOGRAPHY

Jordanian writer, director, and producer Bassel Ghandour is a graduate of the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California (USC). He wrote and produced the Academy Award-nominated and BAFTA-winning film *Theeb*, which earned international acclaim. His feature directorial debut, *The Alleys*, premiered in the prestigious Piazza Grande section of the Locarno Film Festival before screening at the BFI London, IFFR, and Red Sea International Film Festivals. The film later became a trending title on Netflix across the Arab world. Bassel also directed *Chasing Dreams*, a six-part sports documentary series that follows the journeys of five Syrian footballers pursuing professional careers in Brazil.

DIRECTOR’S FILMOGRAPHY

- 2024 **Chasing Dreams** docuseries
- 2021 **The Alleys** feature film

TUNISIA, FRANCE, QATAR, SAUDI ARABIA, SLOVENIA

PLAGUE

BALAA

YOUSSEF CHEBBI



SYNOPSIS

In 2010, under the corrupt pre-revolutionary regime, a container of ornamental palms is imported for the presidential palace. Hidden inside is the red palm weevil, a parasite that will silently spread across the country. Years later, in Tozeur, on the edge of the Tunisian desert, twin brothers Zied and Ali work in a vast palm grove. While Zied plans to marry Hana, a young woman caught between economic pressure and family expectations, Ali drifts from day to day, uneasy and increasingly isolated. When Zied is bitten by a viper and falls into a coma, the fragile balance between the brothers collapses. A sandstorm engulfs the town and the palms show the first signs of decay. Ali has secretly trapped a red palm weevil, unaware it will become the catalyst for something far more destructive. Zied eventually wakes – but he is no longer the same. He withdraws from everyone, even Hana, and develops a strange bond with the parasite. As if responding to him alone, the weevils let him guide their movements, deliberately spreading the infestation. As the palms rot from within, a slow and implacable revenge takes shape.

LOGLINE

A farming town lost at the gates of the Tunisian desert. Zied and Ali are twin brothers, they are in charge of a palm grove. While Zied plans to marry Hana, Ali lives from day to day. But everything changes when Ali discovers a red palm-eating insect : the weevil.



Youssef Chebbi,
*Director and
Screenwriter*



Fares Ladjimi,
Producer

NEED TO COMPLETE THE FILM Color grading, sound mixing, English or French subtitles	MAIN PRODUCTION COMPANY Supernova films	CREATIVE TEAM Youssef Chebbi, <i>Director and Screenwriter</i> François Michel Allegrini, <i>Screenwriter</i> Hazem Berrabah, <i>DoP</i> Valentin Feron, <i>Editor</i> Thomas Kuratli, <i>Music</i> Ali and Anis Massoudi, Eya Bellagha, Mohamed Grayaa, <i>Main Cast</i>	DELEGATE PRODUCTION COMPANY Supernova films
GENRE / SPECS Fiction / Color	CO-PRODUCTION COMPANIES Blast Films Portobisso		ADDRESS 32 rue Lebour 93100 Montreuil
CURRENT TIME / ESTIMATED RUNTIME 61’ / 105’	CURRENT STATUS OF THE PROJECT Editing		DIRECTOR’S CONTACTS Youssef Chebbi info@supernovafilms.fr
LANGUAGE / SUBTITLES Arabic / French	SALES The Party Film Sales		PRODUCER’S CONTACTS Fares Ladjimi fares@supernovafilms.fr +33 633557436
BUDGET / FINANCING NEEDED € 960.000 / € 60.000	FUNDS OR AWARDS RECEIVED Ministry of Culture Tunisia, Red Sea Fund, DFI, AFAC, OIF, CNC CVS, Metafora		

DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT

I hadn’t returned to Tozeur since my grandfather’s funeral in 2000. I spent childhood holidays there without ever feeling attached. But in 2019, a music project brought me back: I found a tired, almost abandoned town. An unexpected sense of belonging took hold. That’s when I met two twin brothers working in a family palm grove. Orphaned, they had taken over their father’s work. One told me a story that stayed with me: in love with a young woman, he planned to leave Tozeur with her. Bitten by a viper, he fell into a coma. He woke to find the wedding called off, his future erased. He still bears the marks – a curse etched into his body. Another element fed this desire: the red palm weevil, a parasite that appeared after the fall of the dictatorship. Introduced through imported palms ordered for those in power, it spread from the presidential palace to the heart of the country – a symbol of systemic corruption. *Plague* emerges from this layering – personal, political, symbolic. Not a social drama, not a political fresco, but a space on the edge of the real and the strange, where nature speaks and insects whisper to men in a world slowly swallowed by sand.

DIRECTOR’S BIOGRAPHY

Youssef Chebbi was born in Tunisia in 1984. After studying art, he directed two short films, *The Depths* (2012), which were selected for various international festivals. *Vers le nord* (2010) and in 2012, he co-directed the documentary *Babylon*, which won the Jury Prize at FIDMarseille and was shown at MoMA. *Ashkal, The Tunisian Investigation*, his first feature film presented at the Directors’ Fortnight in Cannes in 2022, has won numerous international selections and awards (Special Jury Mention at FIFF Namur, Étalon d’or at Fescapo, TIFF Toronto, BFI...)

DIRECTOR’S FILMOGRAPHY

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 2022 | Ashkal, The Tunisian Investigation feature film |
| 2012 | Babylon feature documentary |
| 2012 | The Depth short |
| 2010 | Vers le nord short |

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