

BIMIFF

M A G A Z I N E

VOL. 1 Edition 1

WOMEN IN THE CINEMA



A P R I L E D I T I O N
2 0 2 2

THE FIRST STEPS

BIMIFF started as a little sparkle, a way to promote and spotlight independent filmmakers from all around the world.

During these two seasons we have received over a 1100 projects from around 60 countries from every continent, this historical landmark for us is more than astonishing, comparing with the first reunions we had to settle down what our own film festival would be.

Now we are almost hitting our 3rd season, and to launch our Cinema Magazine, on this transitional period represents the maturation of our project: the possibility to shine the lights so Cinema & Art lovers can get to know the filmmakers and artists that are part of our history. It is a way to develop an even greater and wider Cinematographic and Artistic worldwide community, in which directors, writers, actors, actresses, cinematographers, sound designers, editors, art directors, producers and so on can connect with each other, to exchange experiences, ideas, concepts, to make new projects bloom so Art can be a way, our way, of fighting this awful and frightening times we've been living this past few years.

At BIMIFF we aim and seek to value, to respect and to discover talents from everywhere and anywhere, regardless of their cultural and social backgrounds, origins and specificities. To really create a welcoming diffusion place for art works made with heart and soul by those who find in creating stories a way to change the World we live in.

It's a true honor for us to share with you this first issue of BIMIFF MAGAZINE, and we hope this new venture can be a vessel to showcase you and your films to wider audiences, to fellow filmmakers and cinephiles from the Western and Eastern, Southern and Northern, to all those who feel the heart beating faster and the feel of butterflies in the stomach whenever all the lights are out and we're presented to living beings, (or experimental diversities) on a big screen, from fiction or real life, who will touch our souls and make us travel to another universes for a few minutes or a couple of hours, and make us dive into new stories and concepts.

Vic Kings

Co-Editor-in-Chief of BIMIFF Magazine



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LOVELINE

A FILM BY LUK HO HAI MY



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CINEMA, MAGIC AND HEAVY METAL

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE FILMMAKER ERIK JAYCE LANDBERG
BY LUCAS MARQUES AND VIC KINGS



CINEMA, MAGIC AND HEAVY METAL



CINEMA, MAGIC AND HEAVY METAL

An exclusive interview with the filmmaker Erik Jayce Landberg
by Lucas Marques and Vic Kings

Erik Jayce Landberg is a Guitar player, composer, music producer, multi-instrumentalist, lyricist, poet, novelist, photographer, and film director.

Guitar player, composer, music producer, multi-instrumentalist, lyricist, poet, novelist, photographer, and film director. You're a true artist that we can call multimedia. How did the passion for the arts appear in your life?

The necessity to create came at an early age I think. My mother insisted on me picking up the violin or the piano which I initially refused, because as a child, I tended to lean towards other interests. Although I am mostly renowned as a guitar player, I tend to see the guitar only as an instrument of expression among others means. I perceive myself more as an artist than only a guitarist, pianist or composer. Trying to express oneself through several artforms is challenging and exciting, be it through poetry, music, film or any other art form. I found that one artform in itself can be quite limitative and repetitive which is why I like to combine and experience.

How would you describe the story of "NEVER LOVE AGAIN"? What was the inspiration for writing your film?

It is a love story across dimensions between Hope, played by my co-star Anna Osadcha, and the White Moon Drake, played by myself. The ultimate forbidden, unconditional and impossible love between a beautiful oriental Genie and Her only Master. The movie revolves around many ingredients such as romance, fantasy, action, erotism and harbours many metaphors. There is also a great deal of mystery and psychology present as the more the story progresses the more details are revealed to the viewer. It is very important to me that the viewer becomes an integral part of the movie and partakes along the way as opposed to being an observer only. I like to make people think and question things as there is a deeper meaning to it and a twist at the end.

CINEMA, MAGIC AND HEAVY METAL

The accumulation of talent is very evident in the course of the film. We can see a good composition of colors and framing, a heavy metal soundtrack that makes the spectator stay on the border between a narrative film and a music video. How was this choice made in the narrative?

Thank you! It all began with the music video "God is Dead" really, which is the foundation of the "Truth or Dare" trilogy plot. When it was time to shoot the video, which I wrote and directed, I wanted it to begin and end like a mini movie. The concept worked somehow as it has now exceeded 1.400.000 views on YouTube in a little more than a year, which is really humbling. After the video, I found out that I had come up with all these characters which allowed me to elaborate on and develop a complete story or series. I've come to the point where music in itself to me can become quite limitative and I wanted to expand boundaries and explore something that to this day has never been done. Attempts have certainly been made before but never in the sense where a movie evolves alongside and in combination with a concept based on a song video with a linear storyboard. And being a musician, I find it very exciting to compose the film's entire original score and incorporate my songs into it. The "Truth or Dare" trilogy for which "Never Love Again" constitutes the first part is actually based on different songs from my last album "The Forbidden World".



"NEVER LOVE AGAIN" film scene



"NEVER LOVE AGAIN" film scene

How was the reception of your film in Sweden?

Being from Sweden and all, it's pretty difficult to become a prophet in your own country. We have something here called "Jantelagen" which is hard to explain for someone outside Sweden. But although the movie is only due for release in a couple of weeks, we already got some media attention and coverage in the Swedish press as well as in a nationwide festival taking place in Stockholm which my co-star Anna Osadcha and I will attend.

In one of the scenes, Death, played by Göran Edman, appears very similar to Death in the film *THE SEVENTH SEAL*, by Ingmar Bergman. Could this be a tribute to the master of Swedish cinema?

In the final scene of the "God is Dead" video which I mentioned earlier, Göran Edman's character Death emerges for the very first time in the "Truth or Dare" trilogy plot. It was never a conscious choice though, nor a deliberate one for his persona to be reminiscent of Bergman's character. Sweden is a country with a lot of light in the summer. But it is also one of the countries in the world with the most darkness in the winter and I think that darkness spills over a little bit in each and every Swede somehow. Hence, there's a little bit of Bergman's darkness in every Swedish filmmaker perhaps. A little anecdote worth mentioning is that the church in which the occult ceremony takes place in "God is Dead" contains a painting of Death playing chess in the *Seventh Seal*. Coincidence maybe or perhaps meant to be?

What is the situation of Swedish cinema nowadays for those who want to produce independent films. Are there any support for filmmakers?

Nowadays, Sweden is more known for its music export than cinema I would think. There are available funds to apply for as Sweden has always been a country supporting artists, innovation, art and the creative narrative. However, as of yet, I haven't turned to these options as I want to maintain a total control over my artistic integrity. I am not saying that I will never resort to it but it needs to be in a way that is compatible with my artistic vision.



"NEVER LOVE AGAIN" film scene

Göran Edman is a vocalist who has been involved with several renowned Swedish artists: he has recorded with John Norum, Yngwie Malmsteen, Talisman, who are very successful among Brazilian heavy metal fans. How did you come up with the idea of inviting him for the film?

Göran and I have been friends for years now and he is also the main band vocalist in my solo project. We have recorded three full albums together as well as a few E.P.s. He sings on my song "Never Love Again" in this movie of the same name and I really couldn't see anyone else playing that role. Göran is actually a great actor and has a dark side of humour with a wry, slightly creepy edge to it, and these two combined make an explosive combo. So of course, I called him and told him about the project and he thought it would be a fun thing to do. One thing worth mentioning is that I believe in method acting. That's something that I put a lot of emphasis on as I won't really tolerate any other artistic approach. Whenever I do the casting or direct movies, I make it clear to the cast and crew. No one is really fully acting in the "Truth or Dare" trilogy, which is why it makes it so special. And that applies a little to Göran's dark sense of humour too -laughs-!

What are your next artistic and cinematographic projects?

We have very recently completed "Jealousy – Truth or Dare (part II)", which is the sequel to "Never Love Again – Truth or Dare (part I)" and the second part in the "Truth or Dare" trilogy. It's a Film Noir filled with drama and conspiracy and in which the love story of Hope and the White Moon Drake is endangered by the dark forces who now followed them all the way from the 18th century of "Never Love Again" to the mid-1950s. I also just finished directing and shooting a music video to a song called "Promised of Asgaard". The video will be released exclusively very soon through the press in Scandinavia and will appeal to those who enjoy Vikings and Old Norse mythology. I also just finished writing a script for a brand new project which will be very special and hopefully we can start shooting around the summer. Right now I am doing the casting and working on the costume design.

WHAT HAPPENED IS YET TO COME

A FILM BY LUCAS MARQUES



WOMEN IN THE CINEMA

AN ATTEMPT

DIRECTED BY PAMELA NASSOUR



SYNOPSIS

Just like all the Lebanese people, Alfred, a high-school teacher, tries to adapt to the new socio-political situation caused by the Lebanese October Revolution. Bombarded by the media, he ends up joining his students on the field to protest, in an attempt to change.

Cast: Josef Chemali, Dima Merhi, Marc Abou Farhat, Diana Noujaim, Antonio Chedid, Ribal Merhi

Director, Writer, Producer: Pamela Nassour

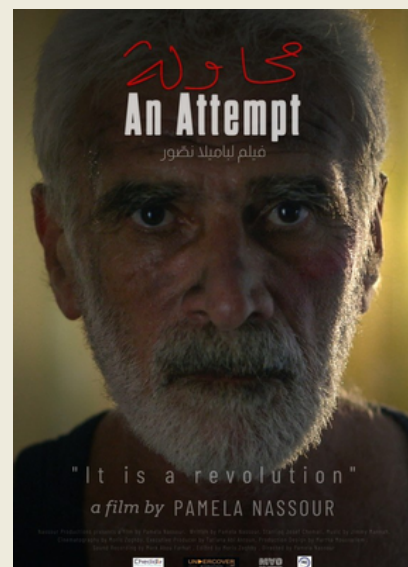
Executive Producer: Tatiana Abi Antoun

Director of Photography and Editor: Moris Zoghby

Production Design: Martha Moussallem

Sound: Marc Abou Farhat

Music: Jimmy Mannah



Pamela Nassour is an award-winning Lebanese filmmaker, film critic and an educator. Her short experimental film Ila Haythou – To Nowhere received accolades and awards at its festival run. She started her filmmaking journey as an assistant director and editor on numerous television commercials and music videos before she delved into film directing. Pamela graduated from the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik USEK with a master degree in Visual Arts - Cinema and Television and she is currently pursuing her Ph.D in Contemporary Latin American Cinema at the Saint Joseph University of Beirut and the University of Granada. Pamela is also an educator and Lecturer at the American University of Technology and The Lebanese International University.

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JULIET

A FILM BY IRINA STOROZHENKO



WOMEN IN THE CINEMA

THE CHOICES OF IVANN WILLIG

REVIEW BY MARCELO CÉSAR

REVIEW



CHOICES A FILM BY IVANN WILLIG

REVIEW BY MARCELO CÉSAR



Actresses Tuna Dwek and Carolina Kasting

THE CHOICES OF IVANN WILLIG

The opening scene is a tracking shot over a lake and a big house in the background with a female character all in black. In the scene, music with piano and violin fills the screen, already bringing us a tone of anguish and sadness. Even though it is an extreme wide shot, we can see that the woman has a lost look in her eyes; perhaps the music helps us to affirm this. The director's "choice" of beautiful B&W photography brings us back to the synopsis of the film, since we know that the story takes place in the 1940s and that mother and daughter will have their lives transformed. This cinematography also brings us the nostalgic and tragic tone of the drama that is about to begin.

The opening scene unfolds in introducing this character, who is brilliantly embodied by actress Tuna Dwek, who watches over a body placed on a bed. It is a corpse of an older man. The time cut occurs when Heloisa (Tuna Dwek) messes with the sheets covering the corpse, played by actor Raul Labanca. The reason for this prologue (in ancient Greek theater, the first part of the tragedy, in the form of a dialogue between characters or a monologue, in which the theme of the tragedy was exposed) is then revealed.

The presentation of the second character in this drama comes to us through a silent scene, full of expressions from the two actresses: Carolina Kasting and Tuna Dwek. There is tension and conflict in the air, and no dialogue. Another positive point for the right "choice" of the director in question: without these two excellent actresses, we would not know where the journey would lead.

The costume design, the hair, the props all very well "chosen" by the director who knows that to tell a good story it is not necessary only actors, camera and sound, we need a whole frame of small details that when exposed on the screen form the whole spectacle. The excellent art direction, always well done in all Ivann's films, takes care of this matter very well. These are details that make the difference.

At almost 6 minutes into the film, the plot is revealed with a flash of the past. Heloísa tries to sexually satisfy her husband, who runs away to their daughter Daniela's (Carolina Kasting) room. Heloísa's combing of her hair and gaze into the mirror reveals that revenge and the possible outcome of the plot is on the way. Women abused and violated not only physically but also morally. It is the portrait of the sexist and perverse society that has been perpetuated over the years from the time of colonial Brazil to the mediocre time we live in (little has changed), of democracy ruled by disgusting, domineering white men. The half words go far beyond a confession of murder; the half words are the confrontation of two strong women who seek the strength to survive so much submissiveness.

The final dialogue between the two is liberating and the "choice" to leave to try a new beginning, perhaps this is all that is left for the abused. The wound remains, but life must go on. Daniela in a white dress is the flag of peace with the past, Heloísa all in black is mourning for the omission and consent for all the drama. The song "Never Forget" by Ricardo Severo, masterfully interpreted by Vânia Bastos, fills our hearts and soothes a tear that insists on descending after the farewell of mother and daughter. They are simply "choices".

The medium-length film completes 5 years of filming, with a script that went through 7 treatments. There were 3 days of filming and an interruption due to Carolina Kasting's pregnancy. The film has been in 105 festivals and has won the incredible number of 84 awards. I have personal contact with the director and consider him a great friend, and I have already told him that "Choices" is his masterpiece.

Ivann Willig graduated in Scenic Arts (UNI-RIO) and Cinema (UNESA) and has always worked as a director, screenwriter and hero-producer of his own films. He is the author of the book "Grades do Preconceito". Some of his short films are: "Elas Preferem Jiló", "Na Hora de Dizer Sim...", "A Idade da Inocência", "Rosas" and "Entreolhares".

Marcelo Cesar (March/2022)



The director Ivann Willig

WHEN THE PRISONS FROM THE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE BREAK DOWN

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE FILMMAKER INGRID FRANCHI
BY MARCELO CÉSAR AND VIC KINGS



WHEN THE PRISONS FROM THE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE BREAK DOWN

WHEN THE PRISONS FROM THE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE BREAK DOWN



WHEN THE PRISONS FROM THE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE BREAK DOWN

An exclusive interview with the filmmaker Ingrid Franchi
by Marcelo César and Vic Kings

Ingrid Franchi is a self-taught director and screenwriter. She directed several award-winning short films such as "In Humain" and "L'Abaya". She works a lot around the theme of the rights of women, the oppressed and children. She also directed the French part of the film "Trainstation", multiple times selected and awarded in international festivals; and the series "A billion to one", awarded and broadcasted on Amazon Prime US. The filmmaker is currently on the post production of the series "Prisoner", project selected and awarded in twenty festivals, including BIMIFF.

With each selection and award, "Prisoner" proves to be a very successful project that is completed with a lot of grit and consistency. Can you tell us more about your journey as a filmmaker up to this point?

Born in Marseille, I am a self-educated, autodidact screenwriter, and director. At 18 I made my first short film called In Humain which received two prizes, for the category "best young film director" at the "Video and Cinema Festival". Another of my short film called L'Abaya was shot on 16mm between Ouarzazate (Marocco), and Paris, and was selected to national, and international festivals. I've learned my skills on set, working as an assistant director, assistant camerawoman, stage manager, and by reading a lot of books. The condition of women, children, and oppressed ones in general are topics that have been,

and still are inspiring my work. All of this led me to shoot portraits of migrants for The Red Cross, and a documentary in an orphanage in the suburbs of Katmandu in Nepal. Afterwards I directed the French part of a feature film called Trainstation, selected several times, and winning film in international festivals as well as a webseries called A billion to one also selected in festivals, and broadcasted on Amazon Prime US. Afterwards, I directed Road to Fight for Sfr Sport, a TV show hosted by Lucie BERTAUD, and produced by Punch prod. A portrait of 26 minutes of a high level sportsman which made me travel to every corner of France, and all around the world (USA, Thailand, and Senegal.) In 2017 I finally started shooting the first images of Prisoner. Through this 4 year adventure I met over 800 people. In April 2021 my

team, and I finished the first 3 episodes, and we're currently working on post production on the next 30 ones. During the post-production of Prisoner, I also work on other several projects like documentaries, feature film, and tv shows.

"Prisoner" is a film that deals with characters from different cultures, and consequently, different languages. How was it working with each language with the actors and their interactions on set?

It was a real challenge for several reasons. Even if we had a common ground about how to make a movie and technical skills, language barrier had a real impact on set. For exemple, in Poland, we did rehearsals in English. For those who didn't understand, the main actress translated in polish, then we shot in polish. Afterwhile, someone translated to me the take in French, so I could adjust my actor direction. Because I couldn't understand all the subtleties, I counted on my feelings and intuition. What matters to me is that, even if actors play emotions in different ways because of their culture, the feeling of them are the same. The process was the nearly the same in Algerian, except the English step. It also had an impact on the time allowed for shooting, we had to take that in account. I loved doing that because I had to go deeper in the directions I wanted to give. I had to pay attention on the way an actor from a different culture wanted to express the emotion we were working on. His personal point of view was really important to me. Depending on our culture and origins, the idea of liberty and imprisonment has different meanings. It's one of the main theme of Prisoner, something that I committed to put forward.



"PRISONER" film scene

The opening of "Prisoner" recalls the claustrophobic idea of a prison, with various symbols and imagnetic metaphors. Besides the connection with the title of the project and the whole idea of "imprisonment", how was the elaboration of this opening? Will it have an even greater connection to specific episodes of the webseries?

It's a great question because the opening was entirely elaborated around the character that we see. He represent an idea of prison, that is much more than the physical one. The symbol psychiatric imprisonment allowed to speak both about a physical and a mental prison. This character can not express his emotions, he globally represent the concept of imprisonment, being trapped in his body and his mind. He appears at the end of the first season and has his own developed story in season two.

Watching the first episode of the series, Nina, we could notice a similarity between the attack on the night club in the webseries and the sequence of terrorist attacks that occurred in 2015 in Paris, especially the attack on the Bataclan concert hall. Did these traumatic events in fact serve as triggers and inspiration for the dramatic-narrative development of "Prisoner"? Furthermore, can you tell us more about the writing process of the series?

This first episode introduce many important topics, developed progressively in the first season. Indeed I was inspired about the attack on the Bataclan, but at the time of writing, I was especially drawn from the shooting at Orlando (Florida). The choice of a terrorist attack for the beginning was a strategic thought. It represent the traumatic shock on a large spectrum. I think it speaks for everyone. Even if all of us didn't experienced such an event, we all heard about one and was scared, angry or felt guilty and armless. The impact on the spectator is deeper than an other example of trauma, more « Intimate », such as abandon, rape or someone battered.

A trauma is something that occurs unexpectedly, you can't control anything and it's deeply unfair. However you have to live and deal with it all your life. From the beginning of the series, it was important to impact and sensitize the audience to this problematic.

In the first episode Nina represents the global idea of trauma. Every languages spoken in the series are spoken in this first episode. Everyone is living joyfully, carefree, planning for vacation, chatting with friends, flirting and all this atmosphere is suddenly stopped without any explanation. At the end of this episode, the audience should understand the mechanism of trauma. About the writing process, I wrote a storyline during 6 months. And at the beginning of each take, the actors were improvising so I adjusted the scenario with it, respecting the storyline. I knew the beginning and the end of each scenes. We had four years of shooting and improvising, so the writing has evolved a lot. I really like to work that way. I write the dialogues, then I ask the actors to understand the meaning of the scene and not to learn precisely the lines, only the key words. Then we rehearsal before the shooting and on set, first without filming so they can get used to the environnement. Then we shoot and usually with two cameras. So, in that way, the actor can't get a « playing routine » to hang on.



"PRISONER" film scene

In the project, we can observe very well the intention of deepening each character and dramatic storyline. How was the decision made to transform your narrative into a webseries?

The series format allowed me to develop several storylines and ways of struggling for freedom. As Prisoner is a web series dealing with 5 characters struggles, I thought that this format was more suitable than a feature film format.

What were your cinematographic and artistic inspirations for the development of "Prisoner"?

In 2015, I worked on a project called A Billion to One, a collaborative web series with 2 filmmakers based on Detroit and several filmmakers from all around the world. It was broadcasted on Amazon Prime US. The idea was to regroup all our networks to find producers, broadcasters and be more efficient. It inspired me to write about characters from different countries and cultures. This project was really ambitious and I wanted to do another one based on this idea of diversity. It's a good way to open our mind, searching to understand other cultures than ours. It's not because I'm French, that I have to speak only about French culture, it exists other point of views around the world, about the subjects I want to develop, that are really interesting to work on.



"PRISONER" set

The editing of the project "Prisoner" that we had access to in filmic format has the sequence of episodes 1, 2 and 6 (respectively: "Nina", "Ewa" and "The Hospital"). How was the progression of the episodes of the webseries elaborated, as well as the choices of narrative arrangement between each chapter of this intriguing story?

On the first sixth episodes I decided to introduce the five main characters, their storylines, with their respective secondary characters who will interact with them, and their universe. That's why I choose to present to the festivals the first, second and sixth episode, so the audience can understand there's a link between characters. I built the series in such a way that we understand progressively that they are all connected in a way or another.

There's a lot of flashbacks, details, and characters appearing strategically. As the audience, watching the series, we could have a real pleasure to recognize a secondary character belonging to a main character, in another character storyline, or notice a specific detail



Ingrid Franchi

"Prisoner" has excellent actors such as Marion Lechevallier, Xavier Maly, Elisabeth Duda, Ingrid Graziani, among many others. How was the process of choosing the actors?

It's a mix between people that I knew before the project and people I discovered through the process of casting. A lot of people participated to the project, more than 800 if we take in account all the actors, extras, technicians and partners. I needed the actors to keep up with the characters that are really complex with a proper personality. They don't have binary thoughts or feelings, and I needed the actors to quickly understand and spread the right emotion because of the details I wanted to put into their stories.

"Prisoner" has received awards and nominations in several places around the world, including here at BIMIFF, where it won two awards. But how has the reception of your project been by the French public and critics?

It's a great question because on thirty-eight festivals where Prisoner was selected, there's only three in France. I think there's a real public in France for this series, but we're not used to this sort of Project with these subjects as festival, producer or broadcaster. The subjects broached by Prisoner are very committed, complex. It requires attention when we watch it. It's doesn't really fit with French habits in terms of scenarios and image. Producers or broadcaster are not always ready to take risks on a different kind of series, with a special format like web-series for example. It's still also complicated as an independent and a woman filmmaker. We want to tell our stories, develop personal and committed subjects and it's conflicted with the financial system in place.

We noticed that the public is there. There were a lot of festivals in Canada, South America and Europe. I'm glad to see that because through this interview and your questions, I feel like you were touched by this project, and you understood a lot of things despite his complexity. I'm sure there's a French public for it, they really like series, but funders are not ready yet for this kind of project, it's complicated. I'm glad to see that foreigners and many festivals in the world understand the project and like it. They showed us that they acknowledge the engagement and quality we tried to put into it. I produced myself the project. I could improve many things if we had more financial resources, but we did what we could, with the resources we had, and we can be proud of that. Today we won twenty-five prizes out of thirty-eight festivals. We observe that in an objective way. I personally think we should put ahead more genre movies with a real philosophical sens. We can mix a lot of genders. The French cinema tend to make differences between TV movies, Cinema movies, and series. For example, it can be more difficult to have the resources for a series, usually allowed to cinema movies. It happens but still rare.

At our festival we had the opportunity to see three episodes of "Prisoner". What will be your next steps with the project? Do you already have plans for other films and/or series?

First we have to complete the post-production for the thirty two episodes, with editing, sound mixing and color grading before the end of 2022, we're on it ! We are four, I do the editing, someone else is doing the VFX and color grading. We also have a sound mixer and a composer. There is a lot of work. The next step is to find a broadcaster. It's really important to me to end this project entirely with a platform diffusion. I consider making a season 2 but only with a producer. To speak about other projects, I'm writing a new fiction feature film with a screenwriter. I'm also writing a documentary about gender. I also study some of the scripts that I received from screenwriters. I wish I could make the episodes a series someday. I work a lot and do many projects at the same time as Prisoner's post-production.

BETWEEN GLANCES

A FILM BY IVANN WILLIG



WOMEN IN THE CINEMA

DR JASON

DIRECTED BY GEORGE TOUNAS



SYNOPSIS

Invited by a desperate woman, the psychiatrist Nik Jason tries to help her demonic possessed sister and gets into a deadly hell trip of a parallel world.

Cast: George Tounas, Luise Hasse, Silvana Synovia, Jannis Sky, Simon Berhe, Lana Kubryk, Sarah Höhn, Karel Curras

Director, Writer, Producer and Production Designer: George Tounas

Executive Producers: Angelo Borer, Karel Curras and George Tounas

Associate Producer: Sarah Höhn

Director of Photography and Sound Designer: Pieter Müller

Editors: Pieter Müller and George Tounas

Music by: Frederic Mauerhofer and Pieter Müller



George Tounas is Greek-German award-winning actor and filmmaker. He played many leading and supporting roles in numerous film, TV and advertising productions since the early 2000s. Graduated from the University of Applied Sciences Mannheim in communication design in 2004, which is equivalent to Master of Fine Arts, George Tounas is also an award-winning creative and art director, designer and frontend developer. In 2018 George founded a movie and TV studio named George Tounas Films and started to write screenplays, produce and direct films. He also plays leading roles in these films. They are distributed worldwide by Amazon Prime Video.

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OLIVIER LALLART'S DIDATIC "FAG"

REVIEW BY MARCELO CÉSAR

REVIEW

FAG A FILM BY OLIVIER LALLART

REVIEW BY MARCELO CÉSAR



"FAG " film scene

OLIVIER LALLART'S DIDACTIC "FAG"

French films always impress me by the way they manage to bring a good balance between drama and comedy in a very intelligent way. However, not only for this, but for their sensitivity in dealing with delicate and current themes that always touch our souls. And this premise has not disappointed me; in the last few years I have seen excellent actors being well directed by directors who know how to transpose the scripted text into emotional images on the screen.

The film in question is the medium-length film "FAG" (short for the pejorative English word faggot), its original title is "PD" (or Pédé, short for pédéraste). French director and screenwriter Olivier Lallart is very direct in his title and says everything his film is about. He unabashedly introduces us to a 17-year-old boy: Thomas (Paul Gomérieux), his main character, at a teenage party where flirting and alcohol are the main entertainment. At this party, Thomas finds himself involved in a game in which he has to get a kiss from Esteban (Jacques Lepesqueur), the "stud" of the place. From this episode on, the issue of Thomas' possible homosexuality is discussed throughout the school, raising the awakening of the sexuality of both characters.



The director Olivier Lallart

Olivier is very didactic in his film and follows a pattern in the unfolding of the plot. After introducing the characters and their conflicts, they face the journey of self-discovery and for this they confront the obstacles that this path naturally provides. Thomas' friends change their behavior towards him, leaving him more isolated and thus increasing their relationship with the girls, including the one who spreads the suspicion of his homosexuality is his best friend. In another scene a gay couple answers Thomas' question, "How do you guys do to...?" And the answer is the scene at the end of the movie: "You will have to face the looks of people every day, either you lie to everyone or you face and don't care about the looks of people...when you feel they look at you crookedly, don't look down, look them in the eyes..." And so we walk, always looking forward.

But what moves me in Olivier's story is how calmly one must face the question of the discovery of sexuality. The film has a didactic tone so that young people realize that this can happen to anyone, and that it must be faced with serenity and poise. The final scene leaves a message: face your problem head on. Besides films, the director works with workshops and discussions in French schools seeking to teach young people and raise their awareness about bullying and sexism, as well as talking about cinema. Olivier has become an expert on the subject for young people of school age.

In addition to the films "We Feel" (2011), "Ex Nihilo" (2012), "White Swan" (2014), "Garçon!" (2016), he directed two other short films: "Parle" and "Je suis, mais tu n'es pas". The latter talks about the exchange, for a short time, of two opposite-sex teenage bodies. All the last two shorts have had many views on YouTube. His page, so far, has 69,100 subscribers.

If you are interested in the director, pay him a visit: <https://www.youtube.com/c/OlivierLallart/featured>

The director has received more than 102 nominations and several awards in international festivals, of which, at BIMIFF (Brazil International Monthly Film Festival) he was awarded with Best Sound Design, Best Cinematography and Best Supporting Actor for Jacques Lepesqueur for the film "FAG".

France has always had a respect for diversity. Since 1791, France has been concerned with decriminalizing consensual relationships between adults of the same sex. But the text presented in the Penal Code of that year was, however, forgotten in other future legislations, and it was only in 1982 that it figured in the French set of laws in a definitive way.

The didacticism in Olivier's cinema reinforces the history of a country that

since 1985 has allowed the necessary ground to be laid to prohibit discrimination against LGBTQIA+ in various sectors of French society.



Poster "FAG"

Marcelo Cesar (March 2022)

CATCH OUT

A FILM BY KIZITO SAMUEL SAVIOUR



WOMEN IN THE CINEMA

FROM OIZYS TO CLIO

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE FILMMAKER SAMARA BONFIM
BY LUCAS MARQUES



FROM OIZYS TO CLIO

FROM OIZYS TO CLIO

An exclusive interview with the filmmaker Samara Bonfim
by Lucas Marques

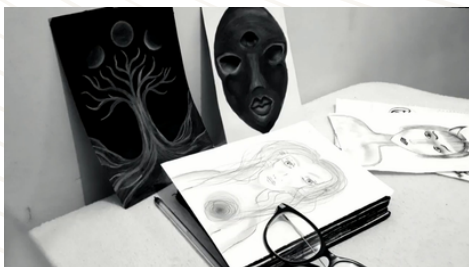
A visual artist since the age of 16, at the age of 26 she started working in cinema with the use of a cell phone camera and texts written for a lifetime.

What motivated you to write the monologue that became the film "Rise of Oizys"?

I was diagnosed in my childhood with bipolar disorder, and since then art has been an escape valve for difficult moments when neither I nor my family knew how to deal with all the chaos I went through in moments of crisis. The monologue was a union of texts, thoughts and other creations that I made during the last 15 years.

How was the choice for black and white photography?

The choice of black and white made a lot of sense as I was setting up the scenes. The contrast present in the scenes was my way of trying to transform them into images and show the viewer a feeling I had, something that is difficult to understand in words.



"Rise of Oizys" film scene

The film clearly makes reference to depression. What important thing can a person going through a difficult moment like this take from this work?

Since I was very young I have lived with the stigma of bipolar disorder in my life, and it always hurts to be treated as something different, a person with 'something wrong'. Seeing people with the same difficulties as me and who have been dealing with the disorder for a longer time helped me to see how all those moments were purely human and everything I felt was valid. I hope to open doors for dialogue and acceptance.

The film is a narration with images. How was the editing process? The choice of images?

Just like the filming, the editing was done with a smartphone. I chose to produce scenes that represented both daily situations of depressive moments and references to mental confusions of these moments. I believe that the feeling of loneliness that the pandemic brought helped a lot in some shots because it was easier to reach melancholic sensations. The editing was the most difficult part for me, many scenes were excluded or reshot, but everything worked out fine.



Samara Bonfim

Seeing people with the same difficulties as me and who have been dealing with the disorder for a longer time helped me to see how all those moments were purely human and everything I felt was valid.



"Rise of Oizys" film scene



"Rise of Oizys " film scene

The use of cell phones has been more and more constant. Do you think that easy access to a camera can encourage more people to make movies?

Absolutely. Today we see a very large range of videos on social networks, both entertainment and informative videos. It's very easy to go after new information and end up creating low-cost independent productions that gain a wider reach over time. It is a good opportunity for those who want to show their work today.

What would you say to someone who wants to transform their feelings into art but can't find any encouragement?

I say to trust what you feel and the reasons that make you want to produce. Surrounding yourself with things that inspire you and people who support you can change the direction of your art and how you see life.

This is your first short film. What are your plans for the next few years?

I have one more script to get off the ground right now and the expectations to participate in live productions and festivals are increasing as the pandemic subsides. My main goal at the moment is to improve my knowledge, study and learn from other artists for future productions.



"Rise of Oizys " film scene

OIL PAINTING

A FILM BY ELISA ALEVA



WOMEN IN THE CINEMA

ONCE THERE WAS III

DIRECTED BY NINA MCNEELY



SYNOPSIS

3 women bound to a shared soul oscillating between the throes of brutality and piety. A visceral display of true sisterhood- they suffer together, thrive together and bleed together.

Cast: Karen Chuang, Diana Schoenfeld, Angel Mammoliti

Director, Writer, Producer, Choreographer, Animator and

Editor: Nina McNeely

Comissioner: Entity Dance Company

Director of Photography: Nathan Kim

Projection Tech: Quin Cabalquinto

Music by: Umru and Warpstr



Nina McNeely is a storyteller, provocateur, and a creator. She is a choreographer, visual artist, director, creative director, and animator. Nina is madly in love with people, and finds no greater pleasure than studying the human condition. In her experience, the human form in motion is both poignant and poetic, capable of expressing concepts and feelings that words simply cannot. She sees the connection and chemistry between people as an immeasurable force, containing pure electricity. Nina's work is visceral, rebellious, rowdy - and at once introspective, delicate, and alluring. She strives to be an unknowing vessel that channels artistic expression, and a guide that may lead any willing artist towards their own truth. As an avid believer in Magick, Nina has a keen eye for those who contain it. She prides herself in her preparedness, attention to detail, and work ethic - she never shies from a challenge. Throughout her career, Nina has been fortunate to work with Björk, Gaspar Noé, The Weeknd, Rihanna, Foo Fighters, Sam Smith, Alicia Keyes and black midi to name a few - all legends in their own right.

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HAUTE CUISINE

A FILM BY MERRYL ROCHE



WOMEN IN THE CINEMA

REPRESSION, OBSESSION AND UNWELCOME ADVANCES

REVIEW BY RICHARD CAEIRO

REVIEW

UNWELCOME ADVANCES

A FILM BY RICARDO ALVARADO

R E V I E W B Y R I C H A R D C A E I R O



"Unwelcome Advances " film scene

REPRESSION, OBSESSION AND UNWELCOME ADVANCES

It takes a lot of sensitivity to transcribe a real event to the big screen, even more so when dealing with violent crimes that have so many layers going beyond the binary concepts of right and wrong. In the feature film "Unwelcome Advances" we are confronted with the story of performance artist Reinaldo Alvarez, who finds himself involved in a web of lies and aggressions with his neighbor. Director, producer, and screenwriter Ricardo Alvarado (who also plays powerfully the role of Reinaldo) stitches together a film with nuances of a psychological thriller with a tragic unfolding for the characters.

The protagonist is presented in his dressing room getting ready to go on stage, and soon a climate of distrust is perceived among those who prepare him for the show. Intrigues that already form the clouds of tension between those involved in the plot. Reinaldo has just ended an abusive relationship of betrayal and violence, unfortunately a common evil that afflicts relationships in all spectrums of sexuality, here addressed within the LGBTQIA+ community.

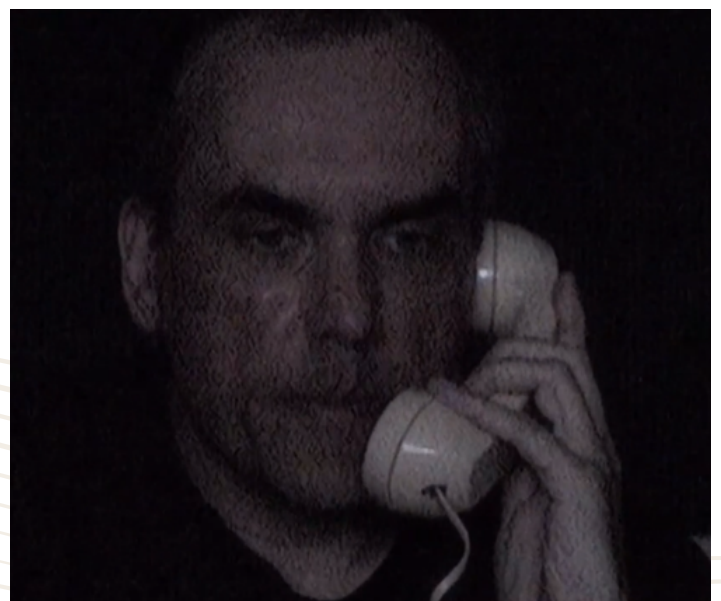
After his work, we then meet his home. The place where the character lives is claustrophobic, the entrance to the apartment is a narrow corridor with low lighting, a place that illustrates well the living conditions of the character, contrasting with the glamour of the performing arts and concert halls: the harsh and often lackluster reality of low-income people trying, in a foreign country, to survive on their art and craft. And there we meet his neighbor Cal Irving, played strongly by Patrick Devaney, who in his first appearance brings to his surroundings a gloomy air despite the smiles at first sight.

Then his true dark side is revealed, Cal is a stalker who nurtures a sick feeling of love and hate for the protagonist. A mixture of repressed desire and pathological obsession. Reinaldo carries within himself the stigmas of victims of violence and abuse, for besides the prejudice with his sexuality, his origins are also the reason for the hatred and compulsion bestowed on him by Cal.

"I believe he's Puerto Rican, but I know he's gay and a drug dealer," says the character played with intensity by actor Patrick Devaney in his anonymous report to the police. The phrase illustrates well the thinking of xenophobic and homophobic people, especially in countries with a reactionary and violent history, and that often can hide in their apparently unjustified anger, psychic mechanisms of repression and neurosis.

Alvarado carries in his character and in his story the drama of several artists, immigrants, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community who find themselves trapped in problematic and abusive relationships, and in adverse conditions that cause them unimaginable trauma and pain, and that can in many cases lead to extreme and irreparable actions.

The film has received several important awards and nominations by the festivals in which it is selected around the world. At BIMIFF (Brazil International Monthly Independent Film Festival) The film has received several important awards and nominations by the festivals in which it is selected around the world. At BIMIFF (Brazil International Monthly Independent Film Festival) Alvarado's vigorous direction was awarded in our 17th Competition. The director arrived in New York in the late 60's from Puerto Rico and studied theater at The New York School For Film & Television. Since then Reinaldo has worked as an actor, musician and model in various productions, projects and agencies. "Unwelcome Advances" is his first feature film as director and screenwriter, and with its huge success, reaching 50 official selections and 24 awards, this is surely just his début behind the camera.



"Unwelcome Advances " film scene

THE VOICE OF THE UNHEARD

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE FILMMAKER SAHAR MIRZAEIANFAR
BY LUCAS MARQUES AND VIC KINGS



THE VOICE OF THE UNHEARD

THE VOICE OF THE UNHEARD

THE VOICE OF THE UNHEARD

An exclusive interview with the filmmaker Sahar Mirzaeianfar
by Lucas Marques and Vic Kings

Sahar Mirzaeianfar is a makeup artist, writer and director. Born in Tehran, Iran in 1984, she struggles, as a filmmaker, for the equal rights between men and women.

Besides being a talented director and screenwriter, you are also a makeup artist. We would like to know when and how your career in film started? And besides BLOOD, which projects have you worked on and been part of?

Hello! Thank you for interviewing me. I started my work in 2015, as one of several makeup artists in projects. I started writing in 2018 and I also wrote a few short film scripts. I made my first independent film, BLOOD, in 2020.

How did the inspiration to tell Kajal's story come about?

It is one of the customs of my country that always bothers me as a woman. Since not all women have the same anatomy and may end up with different results, I saw the concern of girls who were afraid of this tradition. They were also very embarrassed (about it). Unfortunately every year in my country many girls lose their lives because of this custom.



Sahar Mirzaeianfar

My film is banned in my country and I am not allowed to show it in Iran, because in this film I told the truth about my country.



"Blood" film scene

When we watch BLOOD, we have the impression that we are participating in the entire trajectory of the character. The handheld camera and the sequential shots put us in the place of an observer, a voyeur, who just waits for the worst to happen with our hands tied. A wise decision of the direction that causes an anguishing sensation of an accomplice. How were these scenes planned?

I have been thinking about the decoupage of this movie for months. How to position the camera, how to nail the viewers... As a result, I reached the final outcome with a few sessions of training with a mobile phone.

In the film BLOOD, we can follow the story of a very problematic social and cultural issue in your country. How was the reception of your film by the local audience and critics?

Your fourth question is very important to me. My film is banned in my country and I am not allowed to show it in Iran, because in this film I told the truth about my country.

THE VOICE OF THE UNHEARD

The performances in *Blood* are very strong, earning the talented actors nominations and awards in film festivals worldwide. How were they prepared for the project?

For me, the actors and how they perform are very important. I rehearsed with them for about three months and prepared them for the film. Even in practice, two of them had to change (the way they were performing), because they could not show what I wanted (them to show).

Besides having won an award at BIMIFF, we can follow the huge success your film has been having at festivals in several countries! How has the repercussion of your project in such culturally different places been for you?

Yes, thank God, the film *Blood* won many awards around the world. But (also) there were many countries that did not like the film because of its sensitive subject matter and did not accept it. Like in Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Spain...



"Blood" film scene

But (also) there were many countries that did not like the film because of its sensitive subject matter and did not accept it.

In Iran, the bride has to take a handkerchief with her to the room on her wedding night to prove she is a virgin, if the contrary is proven they can even be killed by their husbands and even other male relatives, like their own fathers.

How was your interaction with the male actors in a film that clearly exposes sexism in Iran, being a female director and co-directing *BLOOD* with a fellow male director?

In my country, it is always said that women do not have the right to work with men, but in this film, although I was embarrassed because the subject of the film was a feminine and sensitive story, I was able to have a good relationship with male actors and agents, and we all had a good relationship (during the production), understanding each other.

What is your message to the women of Brazilian cinema, who live in another scenario, but who also suffer with sexism in a country with an extremist far-right president who is clearly a sexist?

Oh, I'm so upset to hear this! We are in 2022 and it saddens me to hear this! I want to tell the powerful women of Brazil that I understand them well and stand by them. We must help each other to make men and women equal!

Thank you so much!

ANDREW'S PARALLEL WORLDS

A FILM BY ANGELA EN YU LAO



WOMEN IN THE CINEMA

IT TAKES TALENT

DIRECTED BY ROLEPH DUBREUS



SYNOPSIS

3 boys struggle to reach their dreams as rap artists while dealing with their family lives that are holding them back at the same time. Despite their strengths, they all have weaknesses and causes them to work together in order to make their dream become a reality no matter how impossible it may seem.

Cast: Jon Meggison, Ezra Taylor, Roleph Dubreus, Briana Bui, Daniel Belles, Jack House, Aaron Switzer, Crystal Renee, Ryosuke Sekoguchi, Kailana Paresa and Olivia Kovach

Director, Writer, Producer and Editor: Roleph Dubreus

Cinematography by: Gurjant Sidhu, Roleph Dubreus, Tryston Switzer

Sound Engineer: Tryston Switzer



Roleph Dubreus is a Haitian born in America who fell in love with TV since he was young. TV showed him how to grow up and create the ideals he has today. It was then he knew he wanted to do the same thing: make shows/movies for people to enjoy and learn from. The intricacies of how film is designed within a story is amazing to him. It's that passion and drive to create stories that are worth telling and worth witnessing is why he strived to create his latest film "It Takes Talent". Which is only a stepping stone to greater films in the future.

NAUSEA

A FILM BY THOMAS WEBBER



WOMEN IN THE CINEMA

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THE CREATIVE AND DISTURBING ART OF NINA MCNEELY

REVIEW BY MARCELO CÉSAR

REVIEW





THE CREATIVE AND DISTURBING ART OF NINA MCNEELY

When the film starts, three female figures covered by a veil are centered with a halo of light coming out from behind their bodies, they have their mouths open as if emitting a scream that is accompanied by the music of Umru and Warpstr. They are three characters dancing their heads off in a rhythm that reminds us of German Expressionism. An artistic movement that emerged between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century and influenced the arts in all its manifestations. The hand on the face and the screaming expression, to me, is a direct reference to Edvard Munch's famous 1893 painting "The Scream". Perhaps a scream was needed to foreshadow a century of wars, famine, misery and planetary catastrophes in these times to come. The light that falls on these figures is extinguished and the background light creates a more ghostly scene than that presented so far.

The three characters struggle in this veil as if they wanted to break through a placenta, it is a need to break through that which stifles us, closes us off, prevents us from being born. After an exchange of glances among the three, they separate. They are born to be placed on platforms with projections. This technique is called "Body Tracking and Projection Mapping". It is a technique that explores the body and technology, with an infrared camera that follows the body in movement. In this work, very well executed, the responsible is the artist Quin Cabalquinto.

The first projection is a crucifix that exhales a white smoke that covers the bodies of our characters. A Christian religious reference used to provoke the spectator with the concept of religion in contemporary society. A symbol often used by various artists in music videos. These figures, react abruptly and viscerally to the contact with these symbols projected at their feet.

An eye is thrown from head to toe, awakening in the audience the questioning of the vision of the world that welcomes us and demands from us answers to everything we live. They are anguishing and painful these images that pass through the bodies, stopping at certain points strategically chosen for thinking (brain), swallowing (throat), and regurgitating (stomach). Energy points of the physical body that are gateways of energetic inputs and outputs. A womb gushes blood through the body, the creative woman that generates conflict, anxiety, violence, revolt and protest.

In the midst of all this, a giant red rose sprouts from the heart leaps into the womb that generates life and then bleeds. Our characters' expressions are of anguish, pain, and anger. The woman generates the world with beauty and life, and it returns submission and violence.

ONCE THERE WAS III A FILM BY NINA MCNEELY

REVIEW BY MARCELO CÉSAR

The "Mission Cross" takes the place of the Christian cross. The Jesuits used this cross as a symbol of affection and of the struggle of good against evil, and it was used a lot by the indigenous people in the Missions Region. The two arms symbolize abnegation. An amulet of spiritual protection gives way to the white dove of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Ghost beats its wings releasing an explosion of flowers that cover the blue and celestial bodies of dancers Karen Chuang, Anjo Mammoliti, and Diana Schoenfield. Excellent professionals who, with their bodies and facial expressions, bring McNeely's incredible creation to life. One can clearly see that these religious symbols disturb our creator, they are projections that purge her creator's restlessness.

A red ball passes through their bodies and we return to religious images that are fused together: wings, eye, and cross. A clock, time, and everything calms down with the projection of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which is the representation of the Christ's love and concern for the people. The characters are calm and pouring down a rain of a heavenly blue. It is a return to peace with a hummingbird in the center dancer. The necessary breath in the daily struggle. A red heart explodes, even in a dark blur over the pelvis. The music is one of redemption, and again the three come together in a verticalization of unity and search for the high. The bodies contort themselves in the cadence of ascent. It is necessary to climb, it is necessary to grow. The light returns to the background and they fall and rise and return to the starting position of the film.

It is a fantastic work that leads us to various interpretations. It is that picture that you spend hours analyzing, and the more you look, the more interpretative elements you elaborate.

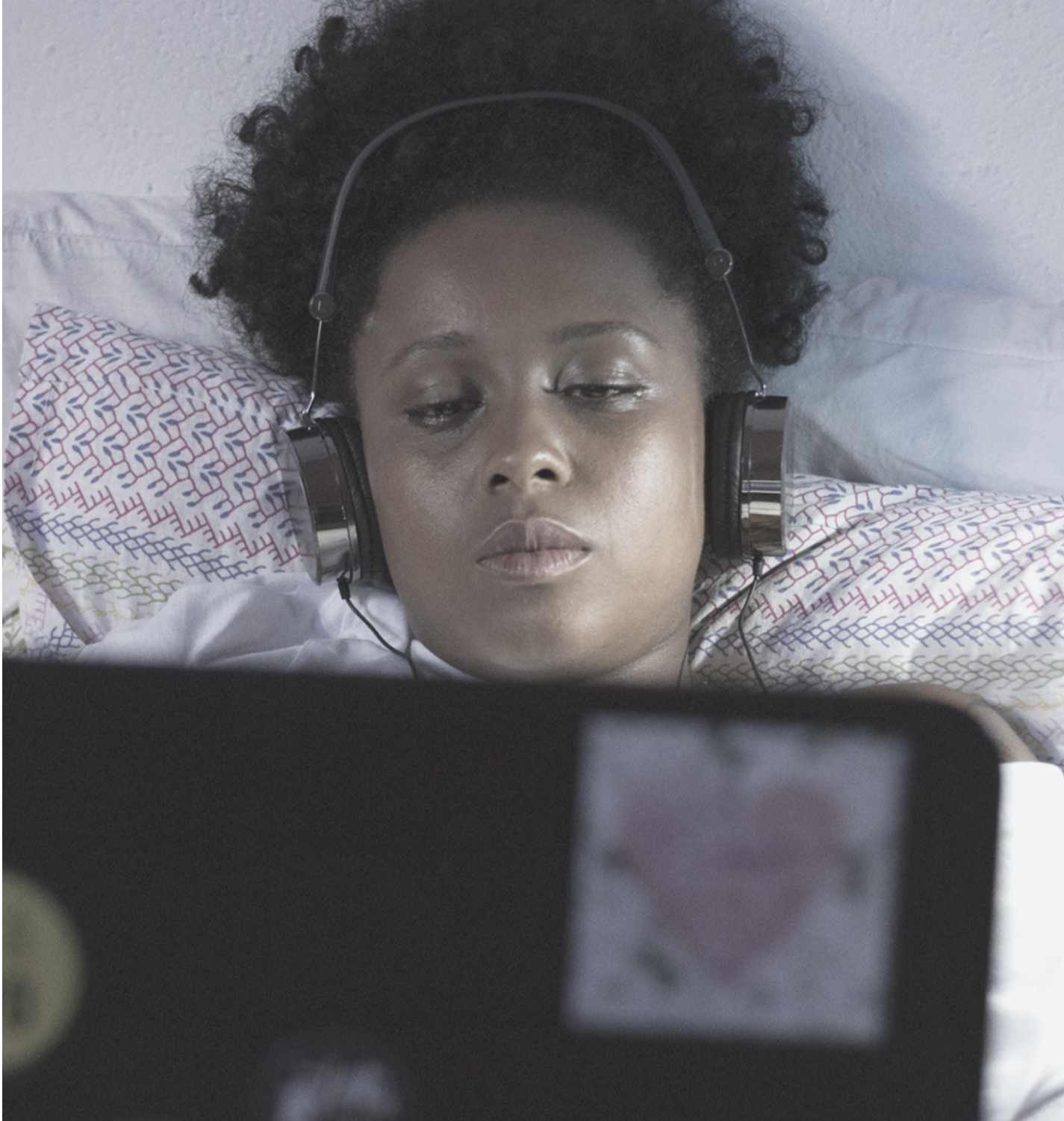
With this film, Nina McNeely proves to be an artist in tune with her time and with the importance and role of women and the influence of religious symbols in this construction.

It is important to highlight the sensibility of director, choreographer, and animator Nina McNeely, who tells us a story through this delicate work of light, dance, and music. Nina has been working with big stars of the world media circuit such as: Björk, Gaspar Noé, The Weeknd, Rihanna, Foo Fighters, Sam Smith, Alicia Keyes, Black Midi among others. Traveling through all her works with these big names we find a visceral look full of references to contemporary and post-modern art. The bodies used by her are worked in a constant transformation of colors, movements and shapes that cause astonishment and enchantment by their extravagant and disturbing beauty. "Once Upon a Time" the beginning of stories that make us reflect the world we live in.

On the artist's website (<https://www.ninamcneely.net/directing>) we find other works that dialogue with the same creative idea of "Once There Was III". They are: "Wife" - with the following subtitles: "Past Lives", "The Grey Ones" and "Untitled".

MACHETE

A FILM BY CAMILA HEPPLIN



WOMEN IN THE CINEMA

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THE INNER-STRENGTH TO OVERCOME TRAUMAS

REVIEW BY RICHARD CAEIRO

REVIEW

THE WHEELCHAIR AND THE TRAP

A FILM BY BILAL HUSSAIN

REVIEW BY RICHARD CAEIRO



"The Wheelchair And The Trap " film scene

THE INNER-STRENGTH TO OVERCOME TRAUMAS

Scoundrels moving in the gray area of society, manipulating mischiefs, showing the many forms of criminality. This is more or less the case in this genre so appreciated by Hollywood, by producers from other places, and especially by the public, who so often sympathize with the evildoer, or at least with their motives, as happens in most films. The Hollywood cinema of the 80's and 90's was notable for the vast amount of crime movies. Titles such as "Die Hard", "A Bad Cop", "Maximum Velocity", "K-9", "Above the Law", made history and are still remembered with nostalgia by lovers of the cop stories. And to the pleasant surprise of fans of crime movies, we are introduced to the film "The Wheelchair And The Trap", produced, written, and directed by Bilal Hussain in the year 2020, decades after the peak of this genre.

The film tells the story of the young detective Michelle Pedersen, played by the great actress Theresa Søvig Poulsen, who investigates a case of weapons smuggling. One day, her partner Farhad Kazami, played by actor Edwin Barandrou, delivers important information about a shipment that is arriving at a garage. On the scene, Michelle is ambushed and shot. The shots hit her hip, leaving her legs paralyzed.

Michelle returns to live with her mother Susan, which for most could be seen as a warmth and relief, but for Michelle it means facing up to a past, and making the distance between mother and daughter explicit. Michelle's days become melancholic and sad; after all, she has been deprived of the right to exercise her greatest passion: the profession of being a detective. But as we say in Brazil, "every cloud has a silver lining". Days go by, and as time goes by, the protagonist gets right with her mother.

Which makes us think how difficult it can be to accept that some bad situations were the initial milestone to lead you, through difficulty, to the right place. Those who think that Michelle is a victim who surrenders to her limitations are wrong. I dare say that Bilal Hussain wants to show us that, no matter how bad our situation might be, we can always turn the tables.

The filmmaker, in some interviews, always makes a point of emphasizing the unfulfilled dream of being a policeman, and how sacred the profession is to him. To the point of expressing his frustrations with police corruption, unfortunately, so universal. Black people killed by police officers for being "mistaken" for criminals, gun contraband, abuse of authority, commission of assassination, and so many other absurdities that should be extinguished from our reality. Back to the narrative, we are then catapulted to 10 years later. Farhad Kazami is the personification of corruption. Michelle, now recovered, receives information from Mie Jørgensen, her colleague in the Intelligence Unit, that Kazami has betrayed the corporation and is working for the arms dealer named Roya Rostami. Upon discovering the sinister plot, Pedersen, a young woman true to her principles, is disappointed like all those who believe in a more righteous world. Now she and Mie come up with a plan to get Kazami.

Hussain's film is about trauma, but also about the strength to recover. About corruption, but also about honesty. The open ending allows the audience to create their own theories, inviting us to dive into a vast universe of possibilities and bringing back an 80s atmosphere, some decades forgotten by Hollywood, fragmented by time, but vivid in the memory of those who were thrilled by the films of Tony Scott and other great directors, and that appears again and again. Who would have thought that this time in Denmark?



"The Wheelchair And The Trap " film scene

WOMAN IN THE CINEMA

BY LUCAS MARQUES AND VIC KINGS

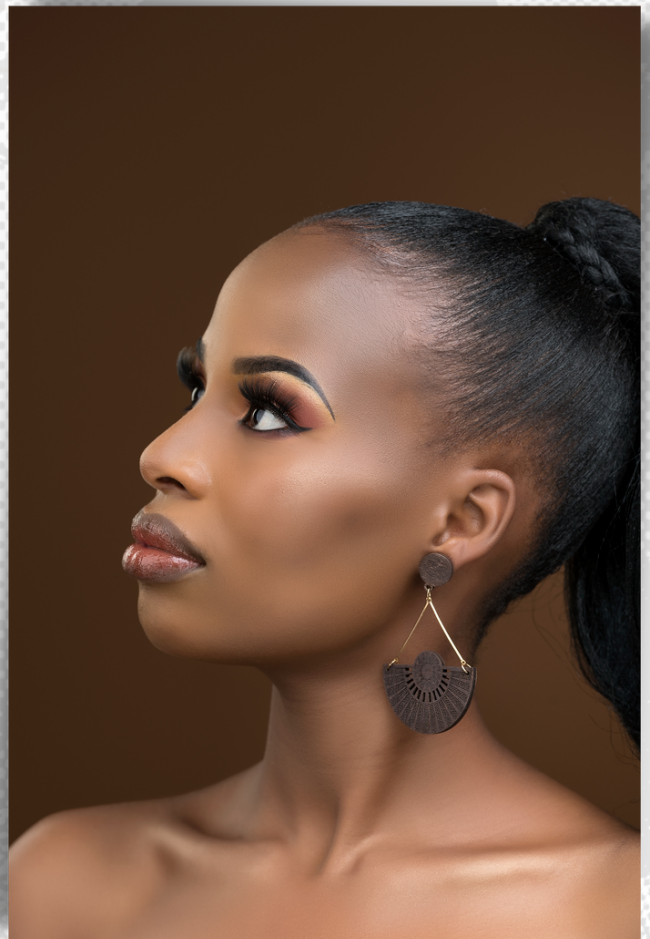
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WOMEN IN THE CINEMA

The first season of BIMIFF brought us incredible independent films during the 10 monthly competitions between the years 2020 and 2021. In our "Best of the Season" competition with the highest rated award winning films from the monthly competitions, we could see the fantastic and extremely strong presence of women masterfully heading up technical areas. From directing to cinematography, from editing to art direction, as filmmakers they have made BIMIFF's competitions even richer and more intense, with works made with hard work, dedication and expertise. With this, in this debut article of BIMIFF Magazine, we decided to talk to these great artists who made history at our festival as winners and competitors of the first edition of "Best of the Season", showing more and more clearly to the film and audiovisual market the need for equity, both of wages and opportunities, in the present day.

Ugandan actress and filmmaker award-winner for the film *"CATCH OUT"*, Josephine Kabahuma, started her interest in film at a very young age. *"My interest in film started when I was 13, the first time I attended a play and it was recorded on camera and shown to us during the entertainment. I was happy to see myself on screen and wanted to act more. (...) When I entered university I was on my own, I spent my first year on campus trying to figure out how I can be an actress in Uganda."* But far beyond acting, Josephine also wanted to tell her own stories *"While on campus, I met Kizito Samuel Saviour, a film director in Uganda. I told him about my passion for acting and he said that to be a good actress I had to first work on my craft. No one would want to hire a newcomer. I spent my time working on myself, reading and learning more about acting, going to auditions, and so on. At the same time, I kept reading scripts online. I learned that I could try writing screenplays after Samuel told me about it, and it was at that time that I was taking a course in news writing, reporting, and production that I learned that journalism and filmmaking are not so different, since they all involve stories. I wanted to be a storyteller"*. Since then, in a successful partnership with Saviour, Josephine has increasingly earned her place as a filmmaker in Uganda, even premiering her own short film, her debut as a filmmaker *"I wrote my first short film, the director and my friends liked it and said I should write more short films which I did and I premiered them all at once. Since then I started writing more and learning more about the Ugandan film industry. Now I write, produce and act"*, the actress reports.



Josephine Kabahuma

In a similar way, Pamela Nassour, director of the experimental film *"ILA HAYTHOU"*, had her passion for the 7th Art born while still in school. *"I remember very well back in the middle school days, that we had an acting class with a now famous Lebanese actor. I used to enjoy it very much and impatiently waited for it"* – the filmmaker says. *"I used to enjoy the disconnection we had from reality and the role-play and all. As the year evolved I discovered that I like to take the lead more than following instructions. Thus I discovered the difference between being an actor and being a filmmaker and I guess this is how things went on. I love acting, even I adore theater... but cinema is something else... It is my true passion and the only media I understand"*.

Born in Lebanon, Nassour has been enchanting film festivals around the world with her filmic poetry that transports the spectator to the beyond-screen at the same time as inside oneself.

In Brazil, the filmmakers interviewed also started their interest in the 7th Art very early. Elisa Aleva, award-winning director for the brilliant cinematography of *"OIL PAINTING"* reports that *"I always wondered how productions were made and how I could get closer. Cinema came to me through acting, and later, with college, I discovered myself as a director. Stories and narratives have the power to take me off the axis and make me grow"*.

At this point, her origin converges with that of two other personalities: Marina Azze, producer, actress, and cultural manager, her teacher; and Vitória Raciane, her colleague in classes and in Sets, with whom she has already acted in award-winning projects. *"In my city, when I was a child, there was a huge movie screen, they said it was the biggest in Latin America", Marina says. "(Back then) going to the movies was kind of a ritual. I saw that huge screen and thought that, one day, I wanted to be inside of it. And I thought that one day I would be coloring the screen... And the day has come, by other ways, but it came!". With her acting school, Marina educates new talents for independent Brazilian cinema, such as Elisa and Vitória,*



Pamela Nassour



Elisa Aleva

who recalls her student days "Through my course in performing arts, I could get access to film sets, so we could see part of the production process of a film and how the actors' routines were. It was then that I started to fall in love with every detail that makes up the seventh art", Vitória reveals.

Another example is Camila Hepplin, a filmmaker from Bahia winner and nominated for the film *"MACHETE"*, who was in love with cinema since she was a child, but really decided what her career would be when she went on a student exchange program and got to know the film industry. *"Every movie I watched filled me with the desire to be part of this universe (of Cinema)", Camila reports, "But it was when I did an exchange program in the United States and was a volunteer at some film festivals that I decided to make films and when I returned to Brazil I started making short films, initially alone, doing everything from script to distribution and over time I got to know people with the same passion and we got together to help each other in our independent films"*.

Anya Khusnutdinova, winner of the "Best Editing of Student Film" in the Best of the Season competition for the film *"JULIET"* also had the transformative opportunity to study and base her career on foreign soil. According to Anya *"Growing up in a small town in Russia, I wasn't even thinking about being a part of the big American movie industry. The only creative profession for me which existed were photography and journalism. I thought having all this creative background (writing, drawing, singing/songwriting, photography) would be helpful for the journalism journey. Well, it was also beneficial for directing. After*

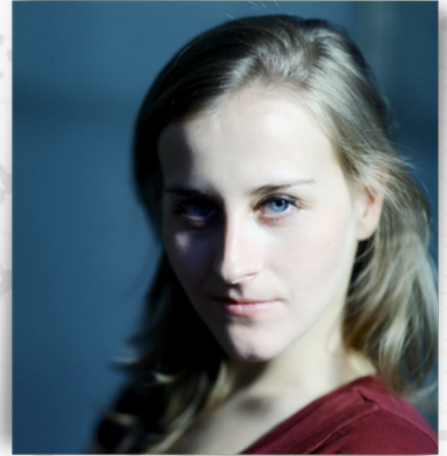
two years of directing and editing, I realized that my heart belongs to editing". The film "JULIET", produced as a graduation project of the AFI (American Film Institute) in Los Angeles/USA, besides being a BIMIFF winner, received selections, nominations and awards in several festivals around the world.



Camila Hepplin



Anya Khusnutdinova



Merryl Roche

Consolidating their careers in the 7th Art with works recognized and awarded in national and international festivals, these filmmakers have as their influences great names of the worldwide Art. *"One of my first influences was Audrey Hepburn. (She) has a lot of influence on what I do for the simplicity, truth and love with which she made each film and that's what I want my films to always have, no matter how fictional the story is, I want them to be touching, truthful and despite of being simple, be impactful"*, Camila Hepplin comments. Besides the protagonist of *"My Fair Lady"*, Hepplin lists filmmaker Ava DuVernay as an influence in her career. *"My admiration for her started after watching her beautiful documentary '13th'. I watched it just to learn something and after watching, as usual, I looked for who was behind it and to my joy it was a woman, black and who made independent cinema. Ava has only enriched black cinema and motivated filmmakers like me to open our own doors because we know that the film market is not so receptive (for us)"*.

For Merryl Roche, director and screenwriter of the brilliant *"HAUTE CUISINE"* her influences stand out both in front of the camera and behind it. *"So many actresses that portrayed amazing roles on screen and that are also quite inspiring in real life"*, Roche reports, *"If I had to choose a few I would mention Jane Campion, Sofia Coppola, Naomi Kawase, and in France of course Julia Ducournau. She did so much for film de genre and women in France, it's almost impossible not to mention her"*. Her short film starring Joséphine Japy is about the strength of women within the highly masculinized environment of haute-gastronomy. By dealing with Marie's problems and challenges within the gourmet kitchen, Merryl indirectly also talks about the challenges she, and so many other women, face within the film industry. For Camila Kogut, an award-winning art director, these everyday figures of strength are her main inspirations, *"I can say that my female influences in filmmaking are ALL the professionals in the field, who donate themselves to deliver quality work with a lot of commitment. Women who daily fight for their spaces and places to speak within a market that is unfortunately very sexist, facing the structural machismo that is still very present, and who do a thousand things to reconcile all of this with motherhood"*.

Kogut also mentions the importance of female representation and presence in more cinematographic areas. *"Seeing women at the forefront, doing impeccable and high quality work in directing and photography is wonderful, but my greatest admiration is to see the growing representation of women conquering other sectors that were only represented by men, such as in the technical areas. Showing that we are capable of doing EVERYTHING regardless of gender, is an act of courage and pride"*. Angela En-Yu Lao, director and screenwriter of animations like the award winner *"ANDREW'S PARALLEL WORLDS"*, has been digging deeper and deeper into her artistic career in Macao, and in her roots she reports finding her greatest influence. *"Actually I was not influenced by any famous people in the 7th Art, but I was influenced by my mum, Lucy Lao Sao Wa, who studied a course of filming when she was young"*. Angela's strong maternal presence is reflected in her love for storytelling and creating new worlds, being then a multi-artist, a legacy of her inspirational mother.

"(My mom) is a wise woman who teaches me most of things. Mum knew a lot in filming, scriptwriting and art directing, etc. Also, she can make music! She's talented in many parts in filmmaking! That's why I am like her. We can make films just with just the two of us!". With each film released, and with each project undertaken, the filmmaker proves to be a dynamo of creativity as well as willingness, and is responsible for everything from pre-production to distribution and marketing of her films.



Angela En-Yu Lao



Marina Azze



Vitória Raciane

However, even with this enormous strength of Angela taking her craft completely independently into the arts and entertainment market, the Macao director also reports that this is her greatest difficulty in the 7th Art. *"I have two biggest challenges. One is my health problems. The other is my limited knowledge in marketing and laws"*, Angela says. *"Since my major was an art one but not a commercial one, it's hard for me to make a contract and then clients would cheat me sometimes. I know nothing about laws and some companies want to grab me more money in our dealing. I hate administrative works so my IMDb was written only four awards, but I got a hundred!"*. The filmmaker's frustration is a recurring problem for other independent artists, the mercadological difficulty is a weakening symptom of the industry in countries where cinema is a sector where investments and outreach are much smaller than they could be.

Even in places with a higher artistic value, such as Vietnam, this difficulty is felt. The young filmmaker Luk Ho Hai My, director of the beautiful student short film *"LOVELINE"* tells us that *"I think that's when the market is getting higher and higher in quality and quantity. We must always learn to develop and look for a chance which is the current difficulty and situation"*.

In Brazilian territory, we experience with every news report the lack of incentives and the dismantling of the cultural sector. Even though Cinema moves the national economy in an impressive way, the discouragement shows itself more and more to be a political project that cuts off from big and small production companies and filmmakers the possibility of creating art in Brazil. Marina Azze, who has won several awards, both as an actress and producer, including here in BIMIFF for the film *"BETWEEN GLANCES"*, lives this cultural dismemberment in a profound way in her occupation as Cultural Manager. *"The most difficult thing in national cinema is to have to listen to the nonsense of the (current) Minister of Culture while you have to turn yourself inside out to keep the cinema alive"*, Azze comments. *"I think that the biggest difficulties go beyond the lack of political support, they are in the posture of some representatives in relation to the laws that would keep art alive. The pandemic was devastating. And it hurts even more, what we are forced to hear from those who should strengthen art, but weaken it"*.

At the same time that there is this external force that tries to weaken Brazilian Cinema, the power of our artists becomes even more evident and praiseworthy, even though they have to divide themselves among different means to maintain themselves financially and, nevertheless, invest in their own art. To Camila Hepplin *"We who make guerrilla films need to have a job to take care of expenses and also invest in our films. It's hard to get people willing to bet on us, on our art, but the good thing is that never stopped us"*.

In a similar way, Pamela Nassour points out what it means for her to be an independent artist, *"Being independent means to disregard the needs of the production companies and distributors. Independent artists do not really care about what sells and what does not. Artists like myself care about the idea and the feeling. We care about what we want to say and we choose whatever means we see fit to state our thoughts"*.

Going beyond the issue of the film market challenges, there is also another systemic problem that covers both the financial issue and the abuse and even violence against women, which unfortunately is very recurrent on and off the film sets. Ugandan actress Josephine Kabahuma lists this as one of her main challenges within the film industry. *"I have experienced a lot of disrespect from men. When I produced my first feature film, **"JUDAS KISS"**, I got men knocking on my door claiming they wanted to invest in film and they wanted to do it through me",* Kabahuma reveals. *"Some said they wanted to tell stories regarding their personal experiences, another said he wanted to invest in me because I was young, hardworking, and talented and he likes girls who are determined to achieve no matter what it takes until I realized he wanted to just marry me. Another said he had a group of youths he wanted me to mentor, but I only had to do it from his house, I got to learn that his motives were not as I expected".*



Luk Ho Hai My

Josephine goes even deeper into the issue, pointing out that most of the men she dealt with on sets *"have that inferiority complex in them that you can only get to understand after being with them for some time. Some find it uncomfortable when the woman is producing, directing, or acting in the main role. They are just not comfortable coming in the second position. They prefer to lead and they are threatened when a woman is growing to be at the top".*

The issue of structural sexism and misogyny in the industry is something that has been gaining prominence in news about the 7th Art, proving again that there is a huge disparity ranging from production opportunities to unequal and unfair payments. Josephine reports on the social impacts that machismo brings to the artistic career field. *"Some people believe that men are supposed to take on the big roles be it cast or crew, however, I, believe there's nothing a man can do that I can't do. I believe women don't believe they can do something because they have been made to think that way. Women can do a lot more than they can imagine".* And the strength of women artists is in fact unshakable even in the face of these difficulties and obstacles inside and outside of Cinema, as Camila Kogut points out *"I am very grateful for having found myself professionally making films, for having had the courage to challenge myself and throw myself into a completely unknown professional universe a few years ago, but always keeping myself willing to learn and to live all the challenges that I find in every film I work on, harvesting and absorbing all the knowledge that living with other professionals provides. I face what others also face when fighting to conquer their own space: the biggest challenge that is being a woman, a mother, in a market dominated by men".*

And with their voices being heard, their works being seen, more and more artists are bravely, resiliently, and powerfully taking prominent positions in the film industry in all regions of the planet. Pamela Nassour comments that *"We live in a world where patriarchy dominates all media, and where women are looked at as objects of desire. They are always judged by their appearance, forced sometimes to please the voyeuristic eye, and this leaves them with a shallow worth",* and she emphasizes that *"We are in a daily fight to end this. And I guess we will need so many years to make this stop. Because let's face it, it is mainstream. As a female filmmaker I would love it if I would one day be addressed as an 'artist', or a 'filmmaker' without emphasizing on my gender. I never heard of a "male director" label. I am not sure why it is the case for women only. This is not fair. Whenever this will end, our struggles will gradually vanish".*

Going from Lebanon to Uganda, Kabahuma analyzes that “Males in the industry believe that the only thing women can do is act in sexy roles on screen, as prostitutes because they believe that’s what women are known for. (But) I like the fact that we have more female artists coming up and taking up big roles like writing, producing, directing, editing, cinematography and so on. With time we shall have more female filmmakers making wonders. Working as a female film maker in Uganda requires confidence, self-respect and value for one’s dignity”.

On the other hand, in France, director Merryl Roche reports that “I am lucky enough to have found the space where I can express my own voice, as an artist and as a woman. Working in France is quite fantastic because we tend to protect the arts. As a woman, it is hard, but it’s probably because cinema is extremely competitive. And I guess I could make films in good conditions because I had the chance to work with respectful people”. Meanwhile, the young Brazilian actress Vitória Raciane, award-winner for the film **"WHAT HAPPENED IS YET TO COME"**, also comments on the benefits of working with real artists “So far my experiences have been as they should be for all women, I have had space to give my opinion, to help in the composition of characters, and I am very respected in the scene”.

Award-winning editor Anya Khustdinova also talks about her experiences working with Cinema “The common thing I noticed between working in Russia and America is that there will always be people who underestimate you. And I love such challenges. Due to how young I look, it was a little tough to have people treat you seriously and with respect, but the only way you can do it is by proving everyone wrong”. This struggle to create your own space and be respected in the workplace is something also mentioned by the talented Elisa Aleva “I have worked in advertising, television, and cinema and in all of them I see the same thing, few women in all areas, especially the technical ones. Besides the small number of female professionals, we still have to prove ourselves to be good enough to be there. In short, it is difficult and tiring, many times, but we have to keep fighting for our rights and space”.

The also Brazilian Camila Kogut, art director awarded at BIMIFF for the incredible films **"VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS JERRY"** and **"NAUSEA"**, the latter of which won the award for "Best Production Design of Short Film" on the Best of the 1st Season competition, narrates, however, the difficulty of being an artist in the country at this dreadful time in which we are living. “Anywhere in the world to make and live from art is an eternal challenge, even more so in Brazil, where unfortunately the current government underestimates, attacks, and eternally decreases the resources directed to the sector, harming all those who dare to express themselves and live from their artistic work. Being a woman is a constant search for visibility and respect to prove our capacity in everything we do and create because of sexism. Living from art is an act of resistance, and being an artist in Brazil is a way to build and fight for a collective consciousness through our work”.

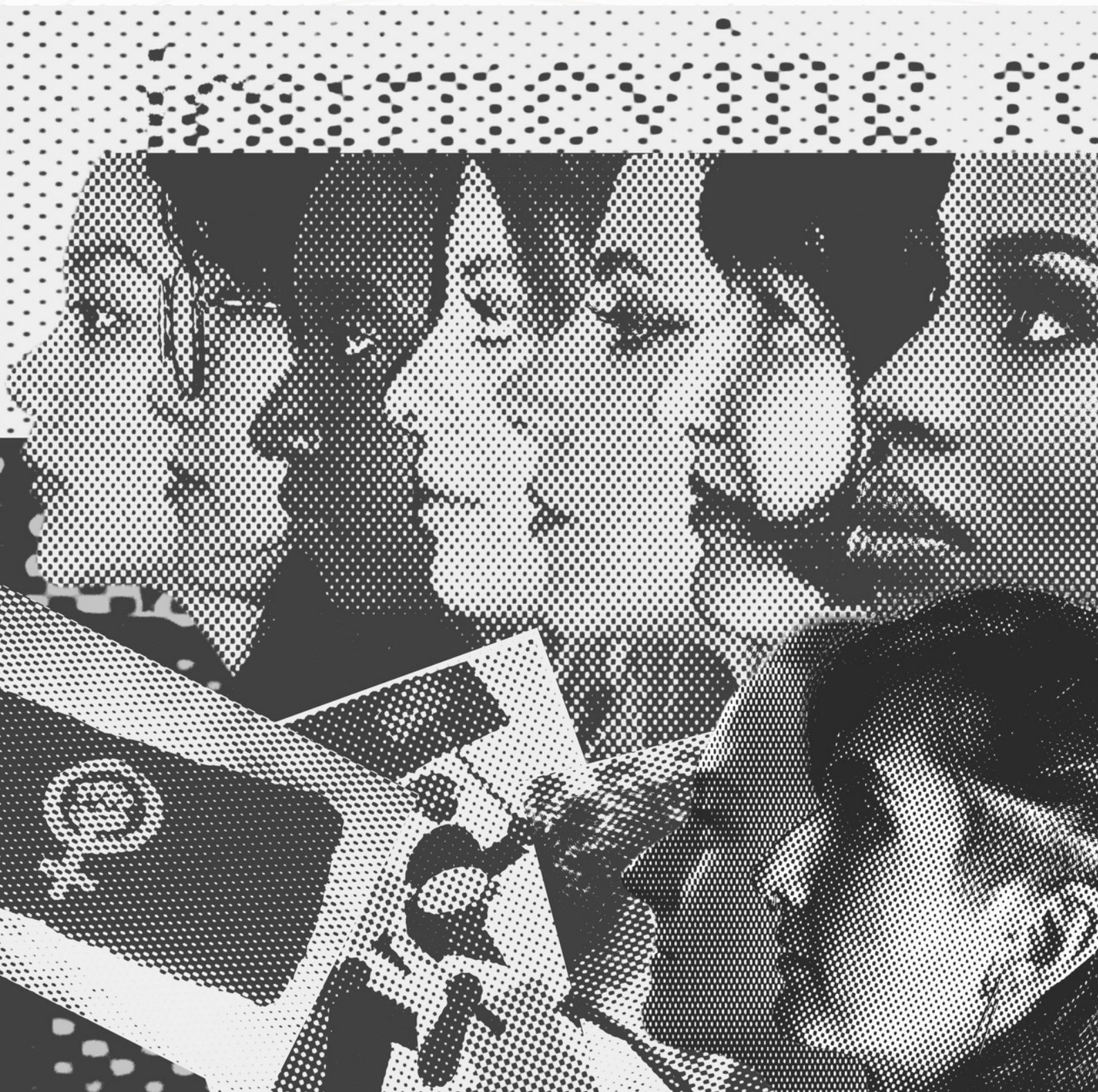


Camila Kogut

It can be noticed that, nonetheless, sexism and objectification are still present in the daily life of audiovisual female professionals. The animator Angela En-Yu Lao explains that “I discovered that those male customers and clients usually think about other things when they deal with me. Especially back then when I was younger and slimmer, they didn’t focus on our cooperation, but they were focus on pursuing me. I don’t like that”. And she concludes by revealing that, “the problem becomes better after I dress up gender neutrally. Clients can focus on our business”.

By attaching the image of women mostly as symbols of sexualization and as "trophies" to be conquered by them, the male majority that perpetuates toxicity in personal and, particularly, professional relationships, transforms an industry that is already competitive, elitist, and difficult to

access into an environment of insecurities. Nevertheless, the strength of women who raise the levels of art to immeasurable status, allied with sorority and the fight for equality of work and opportunities, enables film artists to dream, and especially to build, an artistic space of companionship and professionalism. To create a democratic future based on equity and empathy, where art and passion for creating and telling stories, behind or in front of the cameras, are valued more than fitting into imposed beauty standards and submissiveness to the sociocultural interests of the patriarchy. Josephine Kabahuma concludes by saying that, despite all the challenges and obstacles, "I find joy working as a female artist in my country because I get to have young people looking at me and it makes me happy knowing I inspire someone out there. And when I teach them what I can do, it makes me proud. One has to stand for what they believe in and never let their guard down".



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