



Action for Hope
العمل للأمل

Film School Catalog 2020

Action for Hope Film School

We believe that stories are the basic constituent of our world. Our work recognizes the utmost importance in liberating the act of storytelling, visual and in media, from the dominance of mainstream narratives through the empowerment of the individual creator to his arts and tools. The story (the film) is the only way of retelling individual identity, and the only way to establish a community dialogue about the way the community sees itself, because film allows the artist to recount her/his vision (either real or imagined) in front of an audience from her/his community.

We put this belief to action at a time when youth from around the world, and in particular Arab youth, are marginalized either due to poverty, displacement or geographical location. For this reason, now more than ever, we need young filmmakers with unique visions who are also artistically and technically skilled, to uncover reality and open horizons for rediscovery.

In the school, we try to help the individuals be in control of the arts and crafts of filmmaking in an integrative manner. We work on advancing the students' control of filmmaking skills and crafts, their awareness of the different cinematic forms and styles, the relationship between technician, artist, researcher and critic, as well as the boundaries of social practice through establishing values of participation, solidarity and making a change in society. We take advantage of technological democracy as well as the expanding practices of alternative and independent media and cinema, that allow us to open doors for new artists to take their first steps, without the need to follow, copy, isolate, distrust, or fear other individuals, but rather by emphasizing cooperation, discovery, imagination and self-realization.

Mostafa Youssef

Information About The School

Action for Hope Film School was launched in March 2017, building on the video training workshops that were organized by Action for Hope in Lebanon since 2013, within the cultural relief convoys and also as standalone activities. The school is situated in the Action for Hope Cultural Center in Ghazze, Beqaa, Lebanon, and is fully equipped with 3 film shooting units, 2 editing units, a sound mixing suite, and a large hall that can be used for shooting, screenings and for group lectures.

The school offers a regular 9-months educational program for the youth of refugee and marginalized communities in Lebanon that includes more than 350 class hours, concluded with a graduation film project. The program is taught by competent cinema trainers based in Lebanon as well as visiting trainers from other countries. The curriculum covers the following crafts and fields:

- . Documentary and fiction directing
- . Script writing, and narrative and film structure
- . Research and development of documentary subjects
- . Cinematography / Videography
- . Stop-motion and animation
- . Editing
- . Basic special effects

The curriculum is based on mixing the processes of: direct technical practice, theoretical study, and criticism and evaluation. By creating a continuous spectrum of education and training, the student is encouraged to take the initiative and discover fields for their creativity, within an increasingly challenging educational framework. The school's foundations for the education and training process are:

1. Self-motivation: encouraging students' initiative spirit for self-study and self-development.
2. Critical thinking: encouraging students to evaluate all visual/auditory practices and products.
3. Theory through practice: merging theoretical academic study with practical training.
4. Individualism and freedom of expression: encouraging students to develop their own individual ideas without the need to follow teachers' or community ideas.
5. Collaborative work: encouraging the ability to work in an integral team.

Each year, the school accepts 20 students between 16 and 24 years. After completing their study, the alumnus engage in a professional development stage, where financial support is presented to their debut film project, and Action for Hope supports the participation of their films in national, regional and international festivals and events.

Current Trainers

Mostafa Youssef

Artistic Supervisor

A producer and director based in Cairo, Egypt. Along with Heba Yossry, he founded Seen Films, a Cairo-based film house. Mostafa produced *Sound from The Hallways* (2012, short documentary), *The Mulberry House* (2013, feature documentary) and *Out on The Street* (2015, feature hybrid doc/fiction), that collectively screened in over 20 international festivals including Berlinale, IDFA, Dubai, Istanbul, Carthage. He also directed various programs, series, and documentaries for different broadcasters and organizations, such as *Before Petrol*, *I Now have a Blog*, and recently *Walk the World*. His previous short fiction film, *Blue Dive* (2011), was officially selected for International Film Festival Rotterdam and Doha Tribeca Film Festival. Mostafa was a cinema and media teacher at the Faculty of Applied Arts at the German University in Cairo - Department of Media Arts, where he supervised more than 90 students and 35 short films in 2014. He also developed several trainings and curricula for teaching filmmaking to the youth, and he developed a book for training trainers in filmmaking arts, published in Arabic with the Youth Digital Empowerment Project at ADEF.

Sandra Boutros

Main Trainer, 2017-2020

Born in 1992, a passionate filmmaker and a board member of 'Koun', a Lebanese based NGO. After graduating in Audio Visual from the American University of Technology, she enrolled in various courses in 'stop-motion animation' and 'documentary making' in renowned schools in Europe such as National Film School of Denmark, Barreira Arte y Diseno in Spain and Puppets in Prague.

Her professional journey began in 2014, she worked as a segment director, videographer and editor with different production houses and broadcast medias. Sandra is known for putting her soul and perfectionism into every position she has. To integrate her passion with her love of humanitarian work, she joined the "Action for Hope" film school family in 2017 as a filmmaking teacher.

Ayham Ateya

Assistant Trainer, 2020

A filmmaker, video reports director and theatre actor. He graduated from Action for Hope Film School in 2017 after directing his debut film *Wind Mate*, and he participated in his colleagues' films with several roles, such as cinematography, sound recording and editing. After his graduation, he worked as a video reports director for Action for Hope, Campji, and as a freelancer. He received a full scholarship from Saint Joseph University in Beirut where he started his study for a BA in Audiovisual Arts. He also joined the Action for Hope theatre group in as an actor in 2019 and participated with them in a series of shows of the play *Ich Liebe Dich*.

Suleiman Al-Tinawi

Assistant Trainer, 2020

A cinematographer and video reports director. Suleiman studied interior design and décor, then he joined the first class of Action for Hope Film School. He received a full scholarship from Saint Joseph University in Beirut to study for a BA in Audiovisual Arts. Beside his role as a trainer at Action for Hope Film School, Suleiman prepares and executes video reports, and also works as a freelance photographer and videographer.

Visiting Trainers

Cynthia Choucair

Born in Lebanon, Cynthia Choucair graduated from ALBA University in 1998 and obtained a Maîtrise in Film Directing from Iesav-USJ in 2002. She has directed nine fiction and documentary films of different lengths. Her last documentary “Counting Tiles” premiered at the International Film Festival of Rotterdam in 2018, in the Bright Future Competition and participated at various festivals around the world. It received the UNHCR Award at Cinemigrante film festival and the jury’s special mention at the Aswan International Women Film Festival. In 2007, she founded her own production company, Road2films, producing documentaries, fiction films and TV programs. She has produced and coproduced documentaries that have competed in prestigious international film festivals such as the International Film Festival of Rotterdam, Sheffield DocFest, RIDM, FidMarseille and many others. Cynthia has been a member of the Lebanese Cultural Association Beirut DC since 2001 and for 8 years she taught documentary filmmaking at ALBA university.

Fadi Baki

Born in 1977 in Beirut, Lebanon. Fadi is a co-founder and co-editor of “Samandal” comic magazine, he works in the fields of animation, comics and filmmaking. His latest film Last Days of the Man of Tomorrow has toured international and local film festivals and won 14 awards. Fadi is also the artistic director of “Beirut Animated” film festival.

Jad Abi Khalil

Born in Beirut, Lebanon. He completed his cinema studies at IESAV – Saint Joseph University in 1998. He has directed several short films and feature documentaries. Since 2007, he has been producing feature documentaries, including *The One Man Village* by Simon El Habre and *Diaries of a Flying Dog* by Bassem Fayad.

Abi Khalil is a founding member of Beirut DC, the cultural association for Arab Cinema. He was the chairman of its board of directors from 2009 till 2013, head of its: DOCmed training program 2011-2013, Beirut Cinema Platform (BCP) since 2015 and Good Pitch since July 2018.

Karim Rahbani

An award-winning Lebanese director. He comes from a family of musicians renowned for their vibrant oriental music and musicals. *Thy Spirit*, his previous short film, has traveled around the globe screening in 25 festivals and winning 12 awards.

After the success of *Cargo* (50 Festivals and 19 Awards), his new short film produced by Rouge International & Ezekiel Films Ltd, Rahbani is working on his first feature film.

Lieven Corthouts

Born in Genk, Belgium. He made the film *My Future* in 2008, which won the prize for best debut at Miradasdoc and was an official selection at New York Independent FF, Edinburgh, Huseca, Trois Continents, Docville, among others.

In 2011, he made *Little Heaven*, which was selected for Doc Station at Berlinale as well as IDFA, Addis Ababa, Seoul. It won best documentary prize at Miradasdoc and Festroia, the audience award at Anuu Ru Aborro, special mention at Docville. In 2016, he finished *The Invisible City: Kakuma* about the mechanisms of refugee camps, which was screened in more than 30 countries. He also developed an app to reconnect refugees with their loved ones. He made the web series *Find Me in Kakuma* and the documentary series Reset. Lieven films were broadcast by ARTE, RAI, TV3, CANVAS, TV5, ZDF, among others. He teaches film, short and long video content and photography in different locations around the world.

Muriel Aboulrouss

Muriel Aboulrouss is a multiple award-winning cinematographer from Lebanon. Her numerous cinematography credits include multiple feature documentaries, films and web series. *Zyara*, the award winning doc web series is her first creation as a director/cinematographer, in partnership with Denise Jabbour, produced by their humanitarian Arts association: Home of Cine-Jam. Muriel is now committed to her mission as a *Zyara* maker and a teacher/mentor empowering and guiding filmmakers to finding their own cinematic language through Cine-Jam.

Mohamed Al Daradji

A Writer, director and producer born in Baghdad, Iraq. Mohamed studied Film and Television Production at the Media Academy in Hilversum, completing two Masters degrees in Cinematography and Directing at the Northern Film School in Leeds. He is co-founder of Human Film, an award-winning UK production company.

In 2003, Mohamed made his first feature film *Ahlaam*, which was screened at over 125 International Film Festivals, received over 23 awards, and represented Iraq for Oscar and Golden Globe consideration in 2007. In 2010, as a Sundance fellow, he made *Son of Babylon*, which was screened at Sundance and Berlin, receiving the Amnesty and Peace Prize, followed by a BIFA, Netpac and other awards. It was Iraq's official entry for the 2011 Academy Awards. In 2010, his documentary *In My Mother's Arms* premiered at Toronto IFF and won the Asia Pacific Screen Academy Award for best Documentary. In 2013 he made *In The Sands of Babylon*, which launched at Abu Dhabi IFF and won Best film from the Arab World. In 2017, Mohamed's film *The Journey* premiered at Toronto IFF 2017 and London, and won several awards globally. It was Iraq's official entry for the 2018 Academy Awards. Alongside his work as a filmmaker Mohamed established the Iraqi independent film center where he produced numerous workshops for young filmmakers.

Nidal Al Dibs

Born in 1960 in Syria. An architect and director, he graduated from the Moscow VGIK Film Institute in 1995. Many of his films received international acclaim, including the short *Ya Leil Ya Ein* (1999), selected for Official Competition at Clermont-Ferrand; *Under the Ceiling* (2005), which screened at Montreal World Film Festival and won Jury Prize at Salla Film Festival as well as the Best Actress prize at Wahrán Film Festival; *Black Stone* (2006), a documentary that received a special mention at Ismailia IFF, and was the official selection out of competition at 2013 Locarno Film Festival. His latest film, *Taming* (2010), had its premiere at the Abu Dhabi Film Festival.

Trainers in Previous Years

Ayman Nahle

Main Trainer, Advanced Class 2017

A filmmaker, cinematographer, video artist based in Lebanon. Studied cinema and theater at the Lebanese University, worked on numerous experimental, documentary and fiction films since 2007. His approach is based on interest in combination and correlation between the image of present and the sound of memory (archive) through political conflicts.

Clara Sfeir

Main Trainer, Advanced Class 2017

A choreographer and videographer born in Lebanon (1986). She holds a degree in filmmaking, and a Masters in Arts Research.

Since 2005 she presented several performances in Lebanon and other countries and made video experiments with camera and improvised performances. From her projects: *Eight People, Eight Rules* (Collective collaboration, 2013), *The Form* (Solo – 38 min, 2017), *Rhythmic Variations* (Solo-work in progress- 2019). Recently she has been artist in residence in Japan and presented a solo exhibition *Spiritual Geography* (video installation). Today she works on developing art works combining different mediums and research methods through performances, films and other Medias.

Claude Younan

Main Trainer, 2017

A women's rights activist and a production specialist with a B.A in Communication Arts from the American University of Science and Technology.

She is a video trainer in Think Joekido's. She has since been active in both the private and public sector regarding initiatives that aid the women of the local community to develop and become more active members of society.

Hala el Kouch

Main Trainer, 2018-2019

A filmmaker, actress, editor, videographer and photographer. Grew up in Nigeria, then moved to Lebanon for her studies in 2008. BA in audiovisual, MBA in film directing from the Lebanese University of Fine Arts graduated with distinction. She worked at AFH Film School as a main teacher in 2018 and 2019. She is currently working as a creative director at The Actors Workshop Beirut. Directed more than 6 short films, one of which *Fishing Out of the Sea* won several first-place awards in national and international festivals such as The European film festival, NDU film festival, The Beirut Greek film festival, and much more. Acted in more than 8 short films, such as *52 Hertz*, *Monday 7*, *Rogue Planet*, *Interlude* and others. Soon to publish her first poetry book, working on video clips and directing new short films.

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2020



A Red Ribbon

Sherita Hamra

Directed by
Rawan Khalo

Syria, Lebanon | 2020 | fiction | 5 min. | color
Arabic, with English subtitles

During the clashes in Syria, a girl tries to deliver a present to her lover on the run.

Synopsis

A girl hides a grenade wrapped as a present with a red ribbon under her pillow, and texts her lover their meeting point. Meanwhile, he is escaping from a group of military soldiers. The Syrian war bombings start, the girl's mother rushes her to the dark basement. The man is captured by soldiers but manages to escape. The girl climbs upstairs to bring a lighter, instead she takes the grenade and heads to her lover. Upon meeting him they try to hide, but they are captured. The soldiers start searching them, pulling a red ribbon from the girl's pocket, it comes out with a grenade safety pin. The soldiers run; the couple stays.



Director



Rawan Khalof was born in 1998 in Assal al-Ward, Syria. She moved to Lebanon in 2014, and currently studies interior design in the Lebanese International University. She became interested in cinema, so she learned the basics of filmmaking at Action for Hope film school in 2019, where she directed her first narrative film *A Red Ribbon* based on a personal experience of a close friend. She dreams to continue her career in directing to portray her reality into film.

Director's Statement

This film is loosely based on a true story, I am from the border zones between Syria and Lebanon, and when I was 16 years old, I had a close friend who fell in love with a man from the Free Syrian Army, her love made her crazy and reckless.

After trying several times to call him on his birthday, she went to their agreed meeting point, not caring for the siege and the bombings. She brought him the present she stole from her brother's room: a grenade, for him to protect himself with. On the same day, the area was surrounded and all civilians were moved out, and she lost contact with him. Shortly after, she heard the news of his death, he blew himself up with the grenade to avoid being captured. My friend still wishes she used the grenade to kill herself instead. It is love in the time of war.

Cast

Mosaab Al-Tinawi
Rushaf Mohamad
Heba Al-Sokary
Mayzer Al-Mousa
Baraa Al-Shikh

Crew

Screenplay	Rawan Khalof
Cinematography	Majd Shober
Editing	Yazan Rizk
Sound	Fayza Al-Shalal
Coloring	Zaher Al Kora
Production	Wafaa Dahous





Me

Ana

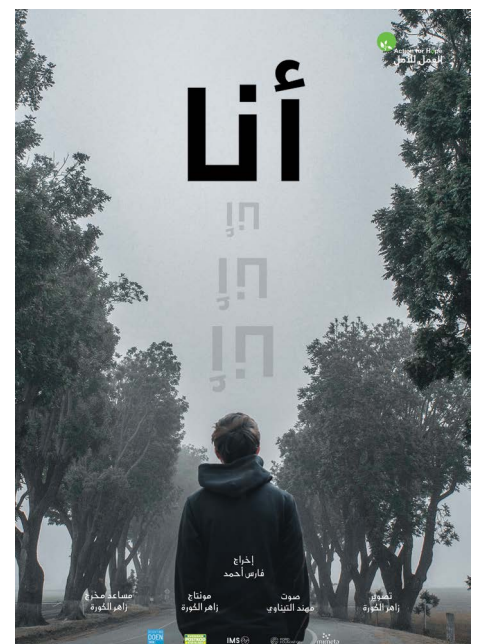
Directed by
Fares Ahmad

Syria, Lebanon | 2020 | documentary | 9 min. | color
Arabic, with English subtitles

Fares tries to take a family picture with his divorced parents.

Synopsis

Following his memory of the day his parents got divorced, Fares recollects his childhood in boarding school. And by revisiting his parents, he tries to know the reasons for their decision through sperate meetings. He finds old photos of himself with his family, all teared so not to contain both parents in the same picture. He tries to convince them of having one last family photo.



Director



Fares Ahmad was born in 1999 in Zahlé, Lebanon. He was introduced to Action for Hope in 2019, he already liked photography and this was his chance to delve into the world of cinema. He loved filmmaking, especially making documentaries. He prefers cinematography, editing and directing, and he directed his first documentary which was his graduation film.

Director's Statement

When I was 7 years old, I dreamt I was coming back from school and our bus overturned and long thorns came out of the ground. Upon waking up, I heard the news of my parents' divorce, then my grandparent chose that I move to a boarding school, where I suffered from loneliness and I stopped caring about my father. On a weekly visit to my father's house, I was surprised by his marriage to another woman. After 9 years, the cycle repeats itself, they had a disagreement and were divorced, so my young brother who has very similar attitude to mine is moved to a boarding school, and my father got married for the third time.

Crew

Cinematography	Zaher Alkora
Editing	Fares Ahmad
	Zaher Alkora
Sound	Mohanad Al-Tinawi
Coloring	Zaher Al Kora
Production	Wafaa Dahous





Super Yamen

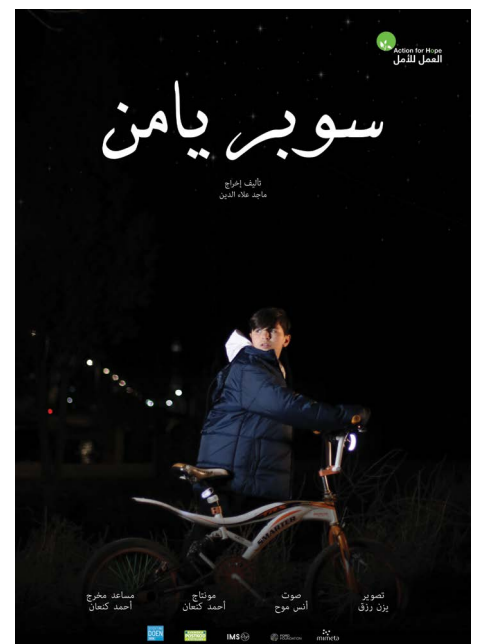
Directed by
Majed Alaa Aldin

Syria, Lebanon | 2020 | fiction | 6 min. | color
Arabic, with English subtitles

Influenced by Super Mario video game, Yamen secretly starts the adventure to his gaming heaven.

Synopsis

Bored from studying, Yamen tries to get the key to his underground room full of games. In the style of Super Mario video game, Yamen meets obstacles, finds power-ups, and advances to different levels. He sneaks to his sleeping father's room, finds the key, rides his bike to the room, but on the road, he falls off and loses his Asthma inhaler. He reaches the game room, but finds the console is broken, he plays with toys instead. Yamen has an Asthma attack, without his inhaler and locked inside the room, he thinks he is dying. Game Over. Luckily, a relative rescues and delivers him home. He thinks he got an extra life, only to find his father has woken up.



Director



Majed Alaa Aldin was born in 2002 in Al Zabadani, Syria. Majed moved to Lebanon in 2012, he studied accounting, but he was always passionate about photography, so he joined Action for Hope film school and learned filmmaking basics. He directed his first short film *Super Yamen*, and wishes to make a career in filmmaking, and to create innovative works.

Director's Statement

The film was inspired by a personal story, my suffering with my father since childhood, where he would hide my toys and I would spend days looking for them. I am from Al Zabadani city which is known for its gardens, so after losing hope to find my toys inside the house, I had to sneak into my father's room and find the key to the electricity room in our garden, ...It was a tough night. The films' main character shares my recklessness and my sense of humor, and through his story I wanted to convey how, in the bad time and place, persistence can have negative consequences.

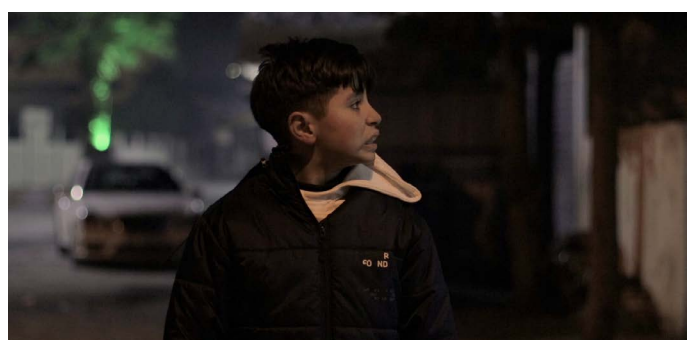
Cast

Omar Rabee
Mayzar Al-Mousa
Mohanad Al-Tinawi



Crew

Screenplay	Majed Alaa Aldin
Cinematography	Yazan Rizk
Editing	Ahmed Kanaan
Sound	Anas Mouh
Production	Wafaa Dahous





The Man Boy

Al-Fata Al-Ragol

Directed by
Shadi Al Wadi

Syria, Lebanon | 2020 | documentary | 9 min. | color
Arabic, with English subtitles

The life and dreams of Oday the tissue street seller and young Clarinet player.

Synopsis

The film follows Oday the young paper tissue street seller and the music player. Oday fell in love with the Clarinet at the music school and he also practices singing. We follow him on the street, in his poor house, with the pigeons he feeds, and while practicing the Clarinet which he never leaves. Mixing the harsh street world with the charming music world, we witness Oday's memory of the first concert where he sang and played the Clarinet in front of an audience.



Director



Shadi Al Wadi was born in 1996 in Daraa, Syria. He came to Lebanon in 2014, his journey in short films started when he joined Action for Hope film school, his dream started to be realized, the school was his escape from reality, society, habits and traditions, the school had a large effect on his personality and life.

A documentary exercise at the school named "Reporting" helped Shadi determine his preference between fiction and documentary, where he became a fan of documentaries and directed his first documentary *The Man Boy*.

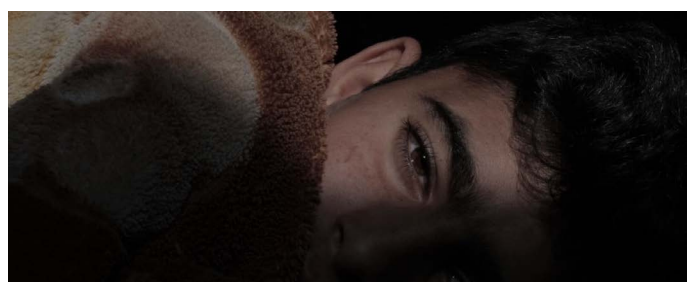
Director's Statement

Due to the bombing in Syria, many families sought refuge in neighboring countries, among which is Lebanon, where dozens of children go to the streets around their camps every day to sell water or tissues, to provide their daily food and help their parents, which is as close as it gets to begging for money. When I came to Lebanon, escaping the war, I was isolated from the outside world. On a rainy day, I went to get some groceries, including a big bag of tissues, on my way back, I was stopped by a rich man in a luxury car, I thought he was about to help me out of the rain, but he quickly started verbally abusing and bullying me, thinking I was selling tissues.

I kept replaying this scenario in my head for years every time I saw a kid selling tissues, I was interested in following the life of these kids in all its details, until I got my chance when I entered the world of filmmaking, to express my emotions and turn them into a form of art, that's when I met the 13-year-old Oday, who -to my surprise- was a street tissue vendor with a lovely voice and a great Clarinet player.

Crew

Cinematography	Mohamed Hawari
Editing	Ahmed Kanaan
Sound	Bilal AlJawhari
Coloring	Ahmed Kanaan
Production	Wafaa Dahous



2019



Belt

Koshat

Directed by
Amal Ateya

Syria, Lebanon | 2019 | fiction | 6 min. | color
Arabic, with English subtitles

Moments before her forced wedding, Israa is suffocating and losing touch with reality.

Synopsis

On the day of her family-arranged wedding, Israa is expected to come out of her room wearing the bride dress to meet her groom. Instead, she reads a line from Aboul-Qacem Echebbi poetry which further ignites her psychological conflict. She is torn between accepting a life she doesn't want or rejecting her society's tradition in exchange for her freedom. We are positioned into her mind's eye, to directly experience the thoughts, feelings and images going through her head, blurring the line between subjective and objective reality.



Director



Amal Ateya was born in 2002 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and currently lives in Lebanon. She joined Action for Hope film school in 2017, where she joined three graduation projects as assistant director: *Wind Mate*, *14.5mm*, *At a Stroke of a Pen*. Then, Amal wrote and directed the short film *Belt* (2019), and is now working on her second film *Angel*.

Director's Statement

I am very interested in women issues in general, and child marriage in particular, those girls who are forced to abandon their education and childhood for an arranged marriage. I've witnessed several cases, where the girls were verbally and physically abused by their families, forcing them to accept the marriage to escape their harsh reality into an unknown and hopefully better reality.

I've made this film as an expression for my hope and fear for every girl who didn't find safety in her family, only pain and neglect. I hope for the film to make even a small change in society, to rid it from this disease, and to protect another girl from an abusive child marriage. The film utilizes colors and camera movement to express the character's emotions. Also, there is no dialogue, instead, sounds are heavily relied upon to convey the girl's inner conflict.

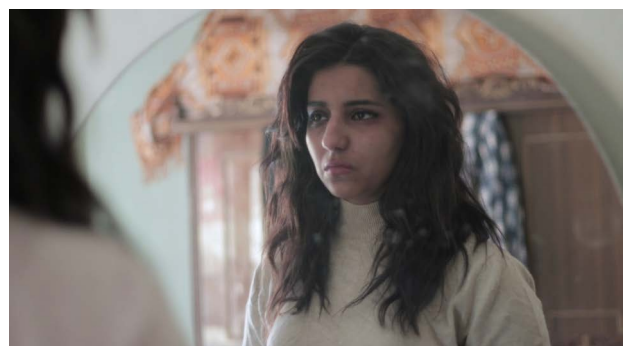
Cast

Hiba Araychi



Crew

Screenplay	Amal Ateya
Cinematography	Suleiman Al-Tinawi
Editing	Ayham Ateya
Sound	Israa Mekdah
Production	Wafaa Dahous





Breathing

Tanaffos

Directed by
Zahra Dahous

Syria, Lebanon | 2019 | fiction | 6 min. | color
No dialogue

An old man tries to hang himself with the help of his dog.

Synopsis

In an undefined place and time, an old man lives with his dog in a cell-like room. He smokes his last cigarette and starts drawing himself on a wall with a piece of chalk. He prepares the rope for his suicide by hanging, and lures the dog with a piece of meat to help him carry on his decision. A series of disturbing memories and the dog's resistance to the old man's hanging take the events to a different course.



Director



Zahra Dahous was born in 1992 in Damascus, Syria. She studied translation and mathematics. Later, she joined Action for Hope film school where she worked as an assistant director in the short film *Sunset* (2019), and directed *Breathing* (2019).

Director's Statement

"Breathing" is a term used for the period of time that the prison guard offers the prisoner to have some rest. But in the Syrian war period, this term became used for the period when the prisoner is either tortured or murdered. The guards use different methods of torture, a popular one, used in Iraq, Guantanamo or Syria, is making dogs attack the prisoners' naked bodies. The film portrays a guard's state of guilt after committing such torture, and his hopeless attempts to use his dog to inflict similar torture to himself.

My two brothers have been unfairly detained in prisons, one of them was a 16 years old boy when he was arrested and never came out since. So, this film is a fantasy of a guard being punished for his deeds, and a way of protesting the use of animals to hurt humans.

The film was shot at a military-owned location, and the main character was a former military soldier. He became too identified with his character, as if he wanted to do similar actions.

Cast

Al Farouk Rahim



Crew

Screenplay	Zahra Dahous
Cinematography	Zahra Dahous
Editing	Wafaa Dahous
	Zahra Dahous
Sound	Ayham Ateya
Production	Wafaa Dahous





Fate

Nasib

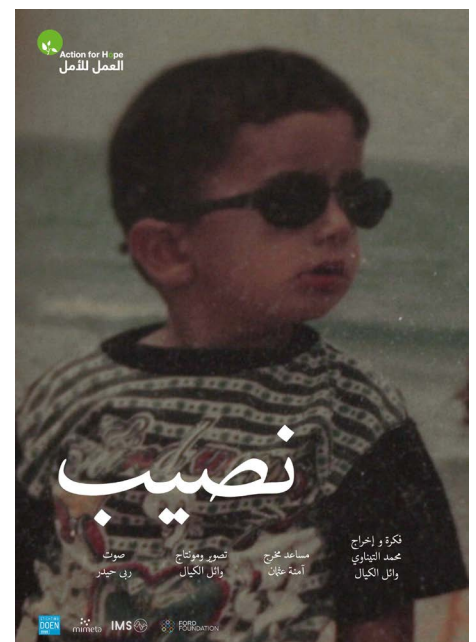
Directed by
Mohamad Al-Tinawi
Wael Alkayyal

Syria, Lebanon | 2019 | documentary | 4 min. | color
Arabic, with English subtitles

A day in the life of a blind man.

SYNOPSIS

A slice of the life of a blind man who recalls the childhood accident that caused his loss of sight. We follow him through his day, his relationship with his wife, and his daily chores. The film attempts to depict the subjective experience of blindness using images and sounds, giving the audience a glimpse of the man's everyday world, his memories, and his mental state.



Director



Mohamad Al-Tinawi was born in 1998 in Al Zabadani, Syria. He moved to Lebanon in 2012, and was introduced to Action for Hope Film School through social media. He learned cinematography, sound recording, editing, and other filmmaking skills, as well as his favorite exercise, setting up and using chroma key.

He wants to make films about the current reality, to share them with the audience and help present the facts. Mohamed's favourite director is Mohamed Al Daradji.

Wael Alkayyal was born in 1998 at Qanawat in Damascus, Syria. He is currently studying in the second year of high school. He arrived to Lebanon in 2012, and joined Action for Hope Film School, where he co-directed the film Fate.



Director's Statement

Each one of us has the capabilities to achieve what he dreams of, an education, a job, or a family, but often we lose the power to reach our goals. On the other hands, people with disabilities, despite their disadvantages, manage to have such power to reach their goals.

At the age of five, Bassam lost his sight due to an accidental gun fire. Despite several failed attempts, he achieved his goals, received an academic certificate, worked as a banker and formed a small family. Bassam has been my role model since I was 10 years old, I always listened to his stories at university, and how he managed to get through the obstacles.

No one ever mentioned his story, so this film aims to deliver Bassam's spirit to those who meet obstacles in their way, to help them achieve their dreams.

Crew

Cinematography	Wael Alkayyal
Editing	Wael Alkayyal
Sound	Ruba Haidar
Production	Wafaa Dahous





Illegal

Gheir Shari

Directed by
Abdulrhman Eltoron

Syria, Lebanon | 2019 | fiction | 7 min. | color
Arabic, with English subtitles

Trying to reach her sick father past the Lebanese borders, a Syrian girl is forced to contact an illegal trafficking gang.

Synopsis

Set at the Syrian-Lebanese borders, a Syrian girl tries to follow her mother and her sick father to Lebanon, she is stopped by borders guards. Following her mother's suggestion, she contacts an illegal trafficking guide and joins a group of refugees. Midway in their journey, the group splits and she is left alone with the guide at the hills. The guide tries to sexually harass her and rape her. Losing hope to escape, she uses violence and flees into the hills, where she finds unexpected help.



Director



Abdulrhman Eltoron was born in 1999 in Homs, Syria. He knew about Action for Hope Film School through Facebook, he joined the school and started learning various skills and techniques and became very interested in stop-motion, he aspires to become a professional cinematographer. Abdulrhman likes narrative films, and his favorite director is Martin Scorsese.

Director's Statement

The escalation of the events in Syria had a strong impact on neighboring countries, which led Lebanon to unofficially stop Syrian refugees at the borders.

Therefore, for some Syrians, there was no escape from death except to illegally cross the Lebanese borders. Refugees trafficking gangs have spread ever since, exploiting the situation by stealing, raping or murdering the refugees. The film follows a girl's encounter with one of these gangs.

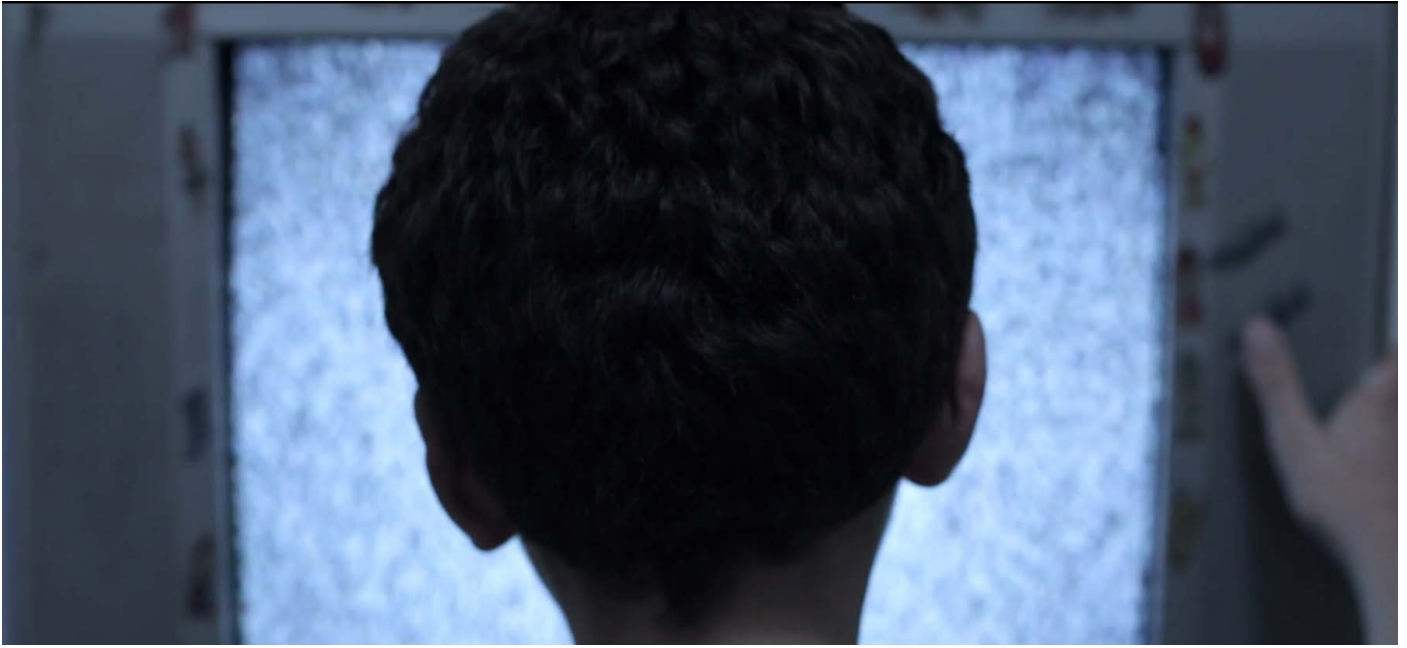
Cast

Raghad Mohsen
Alaa Hajar
Mohanad Eltoron
Baraa Alshikh
Bayan Ghabash
Moafak Kamal

Crew

Screenplay	Abdulrhman Eltoron
Cinematography	Bayan Ghabash
	Abdulrhman Eltoron
Editing	Mohamad Shourbaji
Sound	Ajwad Jarwan
Production	Wafaa Dahous





Live Broadcast

Bath Mobasher

Directed by
Shahd Khaito

Syria, Lebanon | 2019 | fiction | 6 min. | color
Arabic, with English subtitles

During a bombing raid in Syria, Adam and his family try to watch a football final match.

Synopsis

Set in 2014 Syria, a family fix the TV antenna to continue watching the FIFA world cup final match. Adam, a young Argentina-fan, bets his older Germany-fan brother on the winner. The match is interrupted by a sudden air bombing raid shutting down the electricity. As usual for the family, they take cover until the bombing is over, and the older brother amusingly tells Adam that in heaven he can watch football all day long. After the raid, although warned by his mother not to, the older brother goes outside to fix the TV antenna again.



Director



Shahd Khaito was born in 1999 in Al Zabadani, Syria. She studied filmmaking at Action for Hope, where she directed *Live Broadcast* (2019). Shahd is interested in screenwriting and cinematography, she currently lives in Canada and plans to enroll in a film school.

Director's Statement

"Live broadcast" is a deeply personal story. My family and I were trying to watch soccer under siege in Syria. The film shows the reality of many families there. The news on the TV don't usually show these images about us. They don't show emotions of people in their houses, they just show the fighting between the people in power. When I was 15, I decided If I will survive, I will learn how to make films to show people the facts and the stories I witnessed during the war. In our world, soldiers in tanks are scared of words and art more than anything else.

This film is a message to all the people who don't know anything about Syria and Syrian people. It's also a message to my friends and family members and everybody around the world who died while dreaming for freedom and a better life.

Cast

Abdul Rahman Al Sheikh
Khaled Kaito
Faten Nakshbandi
Muhammad Hawari



Crew

Screenplay	Shahd Khaito
Cinematography	Bayan Ghabash
Editing	Shahd Khaito Anas Al Sheikh
Sound	Ayat Mekdah
Production	Wafaa Dahous





Sunset

Ghoroub

Directed by
Safa Mekdah

Syria, Lebanon | 2019 | fiction | 9 min. | color
Arabic, with English subtitles

In the harsh attempt to safely cross the borders with her father, Ghoroub tries to hold on to the last souvenir from her dead mother.

Synopsis

Set in the edges of a rural area in Syria, the young girl Ghoroub witnesses her father, Hamidan, bury her dead mother's body. Both are a part of a small folk musical group, on the run to cross the borders. All group members dispose of their instruments, to avoid being detected by terrorists. Ghoroub tries to keep the Riqq, her mother's musical instrument and the only memory left of her, with the opposition of her father. So, she hides the instrument underneath her clothes and joins the group in their journey across the borders. A decision that can lead either to her redemption or her doom.



Director



Safa Mekdah was born in 2001 in Rif Dimashq, Syria. She studied filmmaking and music at Action for Hope, where she co-directed the short film *14.5mm* (2018) with Israa Mekdah, and directed *Sunset* (2019). She also plays percussion in two musical groups: Sharq and Zohorat. She is currently about to finish her high school academic study, and is preparing to co-direct her third film *Clot*.

Director's Statement

This is personal story that happened to me and my family when we were moving away, with minor differences. We reached the borders, I started looking for my father who went missing, only to find later that he was detained. We continued our journey, where I found in music a detachment from the world of war. In the film, I wanted to merge the worlds of music and war, and to find in music an escape from war. Also, this is an attempt to honor every brief moment we spend with those who sacrifice for us.

I lived with my father only at the period of war, a relationship similar to Ghoroub, the main character, with her father Hamidan, whose tone and way of speech reminds me of my father.

Cast

Abdullah Beirkdar
Ragad Qysanieh
Hosain Ragab
Ayham Atieh
Omar Badra
Ayman Al-Sayyed

Crew

Screenplay	Safa Mekdah
Cinematography	Suleiman Al-Tinawi
Editing	Safa Mekdah Wafaa Dahous
Sound	Ayat Mekdah
Production	Wafaa Dahous



2018



14.5mm

Directed by
Israa Mekdah

Syria, Lebanon | 2018 | fiction | 10 min. | color
Arabic, with English subtitles

A girl, her father and her sick brother are looking for shelter from the bombings in Syria.

Synopsis

During the bombings in Syria on a rainy day, a family of a young girl, a sick boy and their father flee their home and look for a safe place. They find an abandoned apartment, where the girl and her father have to find food and treat the boy's fever. While taking her father's coat to dry on the roof, the girl finds pigeon food, but they find no gas in the apartment to cook it. The father collects cardboards from the street and manages to make a fire in the building's stairs, only to be kicked off by a suspecting resident of the building. Helped by his daughter, the father tries to cook the food in the unsafe street.

Director



Israa Mekdah was born in 1999 in Rif Dimashq, Syria. She currently lives in Lebanon and studies accounting and informatics. She joined Action for Hope film school as well as the music school. Photography is one of her favorite hobbies.

Director's Statement

The film is based on a true story that my family and I have gone through, but with more complicated details. Together, we faced the cruelty of the world, alone, we faced our feelings of loss of loved ones.

In the film, my brother plays the character of the young boy, re-living an experience he actually had, but now with other people. This film expresses the importance of standing by each other despite feelings of uncertainty and hopelessness.

Cast

Sham Dadaco
Abdulnasser Farhoud
Abdulmonaam Mekdah
Omar Badra

Crew

Screenplay	Safa Mekdah
	Israa Mekdah
Cinematography	Safa Mekdah
Editing	Israa Mekdah
	Safa Mekdah
	Israa AlMohammad
	Amal Ateya
Sound	Israa AlMohammad
Production	Wala El Kadri
	Abdullah Beirkdar





An Underway Dream

Helm Qayd al-Tanfiz

Directed by
Roqia Farah

Syria, Lebanon | 2018 | fiction | 9 min. | color
Arabic, with English subtitles

A group of unrelated individuals share the same journey towards their dreams.

Synopsis

We follow similar events in the lives of unrelated characters. A painter with no inspiration, a teacher not finding the right lesson, a young accordionist unable to play in her training, an actor late for his stage rehearsal, and a doctor hesitant to help a sick neighbor. They're all stuck and unable to progress towards fulfilling their potentials, like the director of the film itself, who at the editing room, feels something is still missing. The characters' stories are halted until the director finds the right move. On his way, he meets a group of boys bullying a kid and he interferes to help him, an incident that will inspire him, as well as push the film's characters towards their dreams.

Director



Roqaia Farah was born in 1995 at Al-Qusayr in Homs, Syria and moved to Lebanon in 2014. She couldn't complete her university study of Health Sciences in Syria, instead she started studying Nursing in Lebanon, which she also was unable to continue due to the expiration of her residency permit. Later, she acquired a Graphic Design scholarship, and she graduated in 2019 from the Lebanese International University.

Director's Statement

My attention is always drawn to observing how people behave, I follow the events of their lives, fascinated by their resilience in front of life's obstacles.

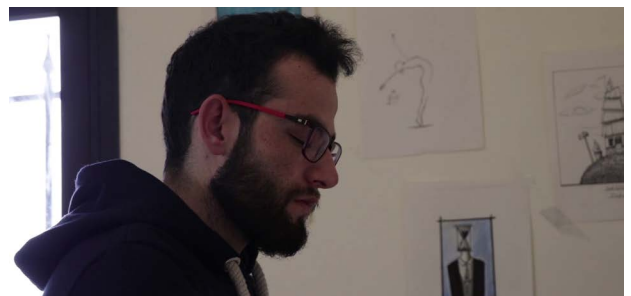
During my training in filmmaking, I followed my colleagues, inspired by their passion and their pursuit to realize their dreams, they work for them without stopping, and today their dreams are underway.

Cast

Omar Badra
Zahra Dahous
Wafaa Dahous
Muzna Al Zohouri
Suleiman Al-Tinawi
Ayham Ateya

Crew

Screenplay	Roqaia Farah
Cinematography	Suleiman Al-Tinawi
Editing	Roqaia Farah
Sound	Wafaa Dahous
	Abdulnasser Farhoud
Production	Wala El Kadri
	Abdullah Beirkdar





At a Stroke of a Pen

Befathet Qalam

Directed by
Ahlam Attiyeh

Syria, Lebanon | 2018 | fiction | 4 min. | color
Arabic, with English subtitles

After her class is punished because of a disruptive behavior by an unknown, a student decides to confront her teacher about his decision.

Synopsis

As an Arabic language teacher enters the classroom in a middle school, he finds an inappropriate phrase written in red on the white board. Furious by the unknown student's bad conduct, he asks the class to tell him about the doer. With no reply from the students, he decides all the class students will fail in the Arabic language subject and sends them off. An agitated girl tries to gather her fellow students to talk to the teacher, and manages to convince a friend. As she asks the teacher to take back his unfair punishment, her friend notices marks of red ink on her hand.

Director



Ahlam Attiyeh was born in 2000 at Qatana in Rif Dimashq, Syria. She moved to Lebanon in 2012, and lives with her family in Beqaa. She paused her studies for two years, then resumed and got the first position in Beqaa region. She joined Action for Hope Film School along with her brother and sister, where they became distinguished students. One of her goals is to portray through her films the issue of bullying at educational institutions.

Director's Statement

Triumphing for the principle that everyone should be judged only for his own deeds, I've structured a story showing how people in power deal with disturbances they encounter, which is usually through collective punishment, with no distinction between guilty and innocent. The film portrays on a small scale the consequences of such a method, which encourages the guilty to continue with his behavior, and the innocent to lose faith in justice and commit similar behavior.

Cast

Hussein Rajab
Rahma Joumaa
Israa Rajab
Marhaf Ziade

Crew

Screenplay	Ahlam Attiyeh
Cinematography	Alya Diab
Editing	Ahlam Attiyeh
	Safa Saleh Alya Diab
	Nagham Rajab
Sound	Safa Saleh
Production	Wala El Kadri
	Abdullah Beirkdar





Breakpoint

Nokta Fasela

Directed by
Odai Diab

Syria, Lebanon | 2018 | fiction | 7 min. | color
Arabic, with English subtitles

On his way home after being expelled from school, Ahmad prepares a fake explanation for his father.

Synopsis

Ahmad, a primary school student, is asked by his teacher to read aloud an English paragraph. He stutters and reads with bad pronunciation, which becomes an amusement for the other students. The teacher, after a short conversation with a visitor, tells Ahmad to go home. Ahmad tries to apologize to him but the teacher insists. On his way back home, he rehearses a fake explanation for his father about his early return from school. He reaches home, where he hears his mother crying. Frightened that she might have known about his expulsion, the mother tells him unpleasant news about his father.

Director



Odai Diab was born in 2003 at Al-Qusayr in Homs, Syria. He lost his father at an early age in a car accident. He moved to Lebanon in 2013, where he quit his studies and started working to support his family. Odai holds a great interest in theater, he joined multiple plays like “Angie Welangi”, “The Elephant my Lord”, and “Ich Liebe Dich”. He joined Action for Hope Film School in 2017, where he learned the required techniques that allowed him to make his first film *Breakpoint*.

Director’s Statement

It was a quiet and peaceful morning, my mother wished me luck, I grabbed my school bag and went out... While trying to read the English sentences, I stuttered in front of my schoolmates... My teacher asked me to leave the class, I went home, and practiced in the mirror to be able to tell my father about my expulsion, but my mother was crying... What happened?

I then knew that my stuttering wasn’t because of the language difficulty, but a sign of losing my father due to a car accident.

Cast

Abdel Rahim Bakar
Muzna Alzohori
Ayham Ateya
Abdul Naser Farhoud

Crew

Screenplay	Odai Diab
	Esmael Harba
Cinematography	Esmael Harba
Editing	Odai Diab
	Esmael Harba
	Taymaa Al Mohammad
	Fatima Diab
Sound	Israa Mekdah
Production	Wala El Kadri
	Abdullah Beirkdar





Solo

Takassim

Directed by
Suleiman Al-Tinawi

Syria, Lebanon | 2018 | fiction | 9 min. | color
No dialogue

A solitary man tries to follow the sound of a solo oud.

Synopsis

A man lives alone in his apartment with nothing to do. While making a cup of coffee on the stove, he hears a solo oud playing nearby, and becomes captivated by its sound. He turns off the stove and starts following the oud sound, which leads him outside of his apartment, throughout the building, until he reaches the roof. There he finds pieces of chalk rock; he uses them to express his state of mind.

Director



Suleiman Al-Tinawi was born in 1995 in Al Zabadani, Syria. Since childhood he loved drawing, visual arts and everything related to “the image”. He then owned a camera and learned photography, and did several trials with short videos, which revealed to him his passion for moving images. So, he joined Action for Hope to study filmmaking, where he directed his graduation project *Solo* (2019), and was the cinematographer of the films *Wind Mate*, *An Underway Dream*, and *We Broke the Tambourine*. Suleiman currently studies art direction.

Director’s Statement

Since the first day I entered Lebanon, I feel restricted and suffocated, this feeling even follows everyone I know here.

The theme of the film originated from chats with friends who share this feeling. I aimed to portray in the film, using desaturated colors and unsettling camera, this state of isolation that has followed us all.

Cast

Abdulnasser Farhoud

Crew

Screenplay	Suleiman Al-Tinawi
Cinematography	Ayham Ateya
Editing	Suleiman Al-Tinawi
Sound	Zahra Dahous
	Wafaa Dahous
Music	Hasan Jabr
Productio	Wala El Kadri
	Abdullah Beirkdar





Under 18

- 18

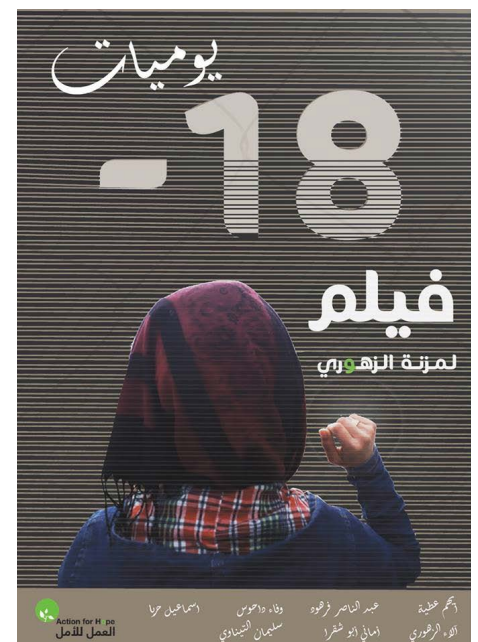
Directed by
Muzna Al Zohouri

Syria, Lebanon | 2018 | documentary | 12 min. | color
Arabic, with English subtitles

An exploration of the life of an 18-years-old girl who got married when she was 14.

Synopsis

A Syrian 18-years-old girl, Marwa, lives with her mother and child in a refugee tent in Lebanon. Marwa was married when she was 14 to a Syrian man who stayed in Syria and got remarried. Her mother always criticizes her of not being responsible, playing with toys instead of caring for the child. Following Marwa and her mother, their quarrels at home, and their performances at a theater show, this film is an exploration of the themes of childhood and motherhood.



Director



Muzna Al Zohouri was born in 1993 in Al-Qusayr, Syria. She left Syria after the conflict ended her study of engineering at the University of Aleppo, and moved to Lebanon where she resumed her study in computer science at the Lebanese International University. She joined Bidayyat as well as Action for Hope film school, where she directed her short documentary *Under 18* (2018) and helped with several other short films.

Director's Statement

During my visits to El Rahma refugee camp in Beqaa, Lebanon, I repeatedly saw two children playing alone or with their grandmother, but never saw their mother. Then, I found out about the story of the 18-years-old Marwa and her mother Khaireya. During the siege of eastern Ghouta in Syria, out of fear for her child, Khaireya decided that Marwa, then 13 years old, must get married. Without her husband, Marwa fled to Lebanon with her mother. A young single mother and the two children she's unable to care for, now, Khaireya recognizes the consequences of her decision.

During the film shooting, I've aimed to keep their spontaneity, by following their daily quarrels in their home, as well as their participation in Homra's theatrical show. Through my work with refugees, I want to show the dangers of child marriage, since I've witnessed several similar cases, most having very unfortunate consequences.

Cast

Khayria Darweesh

Marwa Al Kajami

Fathia Darweesh

Ahmad Outani

Crew

Screenplay

Cinematography

Editing

Sound

Production

Muzna Al Zohouri

Ayham Ateya

Muzna Al Zohouri

Amany Abo Shaqra

Wafaa Dahous

Alaa Al Zohouri

Wala Al Kadri

Abdullah Beirkdar





We Broke the Tambourine

Kasarna el-Daf

Directed by
Omar Badra

Syria, Lebanon | 2019 | fiction | 14 min. | color
Arabic, with English subtitles

A love story of a Syrian guy and a Lebanese girl is challenged by society's tradition.

Synopsis

Upon laying eyes on Sereen in a restaurant in Lebanon, Loay is immediately attracted to her. He chooses a time she is away from her table and leaves his number under her cup of coffee. Later, Sereen decides to call him to chat, and they agree to meet in a park. They get to know a little bit about each other. Over the days, Loay and Sereen start developing a relationship. One day after her exam, they meet as usual in the park, admiring the view, they get up to take a selfie using Sereen's phone, but the battery is dead. Loay gets out his phone and his ID slips out on falls on the ground. Sereen picks it up, and finds out he is Syrian. She gets shocked, and decides to immediately end the relationship, finding it impossible to be maintained without unnecessary suffering, and she leaves Loay alone.

Director



Omar Badra was born in 1996 at Hamouriyah in Rif Dimashq, Syria. He moved to Lebanon in 2012. He works in cake bakery to support his family, since he couldn't continue his studies after his arrival to Lebanon. He participated in several Action for Hope volunteer activities, and he joined the theater group since its foundation, where he joined the plays: "Angie Welangi", "The Elephant my Lord" directed by Chrystel Khodr, and "Ich Leibe Dich" directed by Osama Halal. Omar joined Action for Hope Film School in 2017, where he directed his first short film, which depicts the conflict between love and racism.

Director's Statement

When I arrived at Lebanon in 2012, I was 14 years old, I was influenced by my new environment, and I got to know lots of Lebanese friends, and I started talking in the Lebanese Arabic accent. I often felt I do not belong, until I fell in love with a beautiful Lebanese girl, whom I gave all my heart. But she left me when she knew about my Syrian identity, I lost my personality, my love and my identity!

Cast

Ayham Ateya
Wala El Kadri



Crew

Screenplay
Cinematography
Editing
Sound

Omar Badra
Suleiman Al-Tinawi
Omar Badra
Amany Abo Shaqra
Muzna Al Zohouri
Wala El Kadri
Abdullah Beirkdar





When We Were Playing

Endama Kona Nalaab

Directed by
Zahra Dahous
Wafaa Dahous

Syria, Lebanon | 2018 | fiction | 7 min. | color
Arabic, with English subtitles

A mother recalls the memory of her two daughters on a day during the Syrian war.

Synopsis

Set in post-war Syria at sunrise, a mother experiences the fragmented but vivid memory of her two daughters. The memory of a day during the war, when one of them stole the candy during breakfast, then they played on the roof and saw a beautiful pigeon, and the act of violence that will change their lives forever.

Director



Zahra Dahous was born in 1992 in Damascus, Syria. She studied translation and mathematics. Later, she joined Action for Hope film school where she worked as an assistant director in the short film *Sunset* (2019), and directed *Breathing* (2019).

Wafaa Dahous was born in 1995 in Damascus, Syria. She studies Graphic Design, she joined the field of directing through a documentary film about Litani River. She left Syria during the war, and moved to Lebanon in 2014.



Director's Statement

One day during the conflicts in my city, my sister and I went up the roof without our mother's knowledge, in order to hear the sounds more clearly, not aware that they were the sounds of death. Back then, me and my sisters were teenagers, 15 and 18 years old, we kept watching the brave youth and we were happy with what we saw, until we fled the roof after hearing our mother screaming for us to get back down. The bullets were coming from all directions, one was aimed at us, but out of nowhere we saw a pigeon flying in front of us and a bullet penetrating its mouth, saving us from a certain death. I, Wafaa, never forgot this pigeon since, I wanted to carry it, bury it and honor it, but our love for life was stronger...It is always on my mind, I want to go back to that day, to carry it and kiss it.

Cast

Alma Al Sefsafy
Reem Dahous
Samia Hegazy
Hassan Yahia

Crew

Screenplay	Zahra Dahous
	Wafaa Dahous
Cinematography	Zahra Dahous
Editing	Zahra Dahous
	Wafaa Dahous
Sound	Ayham Ateya
Production	Wala El Kadri
	Abdullah Beirkdar





Wind Mate

Maa Alrih

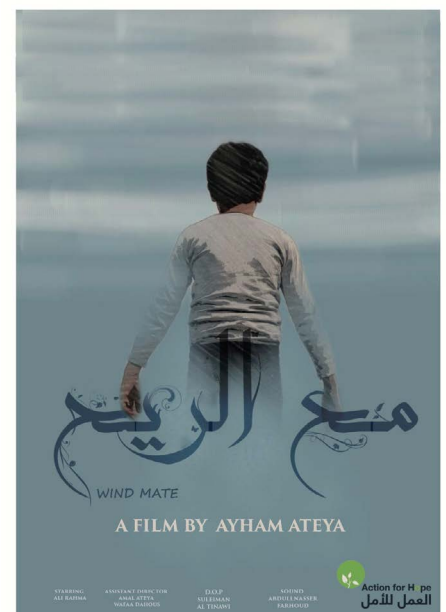
Directed by
Ayham Ateya

Syria, Lebanon | 2018 | fiction | 13 min. | color
Arabic, with English subtitles

Ahmad, a Syrian refugee boy, faces bullying by his peers and miscommunication with his father.

Synopsis

On his way back from school, Ahmad, a Syrian boy living with his refugee family, is bullied by some of his peers. He reaches home to have lunch with his family. His tough father, knowing about the incident, only adds to his sense of rejection. Waking from a nightmare about a personal memory, Ahmad asks his mother about what happens after death. On the next day after his school, the mother asks Ahmad to check the water tank level on the roof. There, he experiences feelings and sensations that may answer his questions about life and death.



Director



Ayham Ateya was born in 1995 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and currently lives in Lebanon. He joined Action for Hope film school, where he contributed in several short films by his classmates as cinematographer, sound recordist, assistant director and actor. He directed two short films, *Chess* and *Wind Mate*, and is currently working on his third.

Director's Statement

I've left my home country Syria two times, once to Saudi Arabia for my father's work and another to Lebanon because of the war. I've always felt as a stranger in the different schools I've enrolled to, the streets and the houses, this includes Syria as well. Everywhere, I've had my share of bullying and exclusion, and I've witnessed close people suffering from this as well.

After finishing the film and watching the main character Ahmed, in flesh and bones, I've recalled this forgotten period of my life, that was alive inside me since.

Cast

Ali Rahma
Alaa Al-Sayed
Husin Rajab
Essam Zaarora



Crew

Screenplay
Cinematography
Editing
Sound
Production

Ayham Ateya
Suleiman Al-Tinawi
Ayham Ateya
Abdulnasser Farhoud
Wala El Kadri
Abdullah Beirkdar



About Action for Hope

Action for Hope was founded in 2015 to provide cultural development and cultural relief programs that meet the cultural and social needs of marginalized and displaced communities.

Action for Hope believes in the role of Arts and Culture in empowering individuals and communities, particularly those in distress. We provide people with access to culture and tools for creative expression to enrich their lives, increase the cultural capital of communities around them, and enable their contribution to our shared humanity.

Action for Hope Film School is supported by:



