

JONATHAN
RAGINS

MICHELLE
BATISTA



Official Selection
**Budapest
International Film
Festival**
2024



Delilah

A DANIEL ALI FILM

PRESS KIT

For More Information

Please contact

Daniel Ali

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Michelle Batista as Delilah and Jonathan H. Ragins as Nicholas.

Technical Specifications

Country of Origin:	USA
Year:	2024
Running Time:	1:43:57
Rating:	Not Yet
Rated Mastered Format:	HD Cam-SR/ 1920x1080 / 23.98psf
Available in:	4K Pro Res and HD Cam
Aspect Ratio:	2:35.1
Sound:	5.1
Language:	English

Links

Official website:	https://www.delilahthemovie.com
Official Instagram:	www.instagram.com/gatekeepercreativeworks
Official HD Trailer:	https://youtu.be/sGFH-f2m8iM?si=bZyYPom4scNrs8Pi
IMDb Page:	https://www.imdb.com/title/tt18251430/
Hashtag:	#delilahthemovie

Credits

Cast

Delilah	MICHELLE BATISTA
Nicholas	JONATHAN H. RAGINS
Zarin	ERIKA BERMUDEZ
Vanessa	VIRGINIA CAAMAÑO
Young Delilah	ISABELLA ALI
Gladys Hernandez	AKISSA MENDEZ
Demetrius	FREDRIC TAYLOR
Bridgette	GABBY CREERY
Dr. Xavier Calderon	DARWIN ROMAN
Janet/Classroom Girl	STEPHANIE MARIE SCHIEDER
Felix Hernandez	ANTHONY QUINOÑES
Luna	DAYANE PIMENTA
Divine	JASON JEANNOT
Party Guest #1	FLASH GORDON
Party Guest #2	NORMAN BRADLEY
Party Guest #3	TOLONDA ROSS
Party Guest #4	SUNFLOWER DURAN
Waitress	KEYONNE SMITH
Student #1	NOAMI NUÑEZ
Student #2	NICOLE COLLAGUAZO
Student #3	ANN TAYLOR
Student #4	DESTINY MULDROW
Student #5	ISABELLA RIDRIGUEZ
Student #6	CHRISTOPHER COUNCIL
Student #7	MIKHI ROWLEY-HICKS
Tavern Patron #1	HASSAN ALI
Tavern Patron #2	ROLONDO KITCHENS
Tavern Patron #3	CYNTHIA BIZUKIEWICZ
Tavern Patron #4	LIEF URIAS
Tavern Patron #5	RASHIDA BANKS
Tavern Patron #6	RAH BANKS
Victor	LUIS REYES
Victor's Friend	JULIAN ALVAREZ

Delilah's Cousin	JUSTIN LUCIANO
Thiago	BERNARD BOA
Baby Nichole	KYLIE PERKINS

Crew

Director	DANIEL ALI
Writer/Producer	DANIEL ALI
Executive Producers	DWAYNE SMITH
Executive Producer	NOEL ROJAS
Executive Producer	VIRGINIA CAAMAÑO
Executive Producer	DERRICK WHITE
Creative Consultant	NICHOLE TAYLOR
Editor/Color	COREY BRUMFIELD
Director of Photography	SOULEYMANE DOUMBOUYA
Art Director	LAURA MUHAXHERI
Casting Director	DANIEL ALI
Original Music	DANIEL ALI
	DWAYNE SMITH
Sound/Mixing	D-MÖET
Grip	LIEF URIAS
1st Assistant Camera	ROGER "CHINO" CORDOBA
2 nd Assistant Camera	LIEF URIAS
DIT	SOULEYMANE DOUMBOUYA
Production Assistant	ISABELLA RODRIGUEZ
Production Assistant	ISABELLA ALI

Logline

If you could know everything about the one you love, would you really want to? And would you love them if you did? What if love really doesn't conquer all?



Michelle Batista as Delilah

Summary

A middle-aged college professor named Nicholas falls for an attractive young graduate student named Delilah, at the university where he works. Still nursing the wounds from his recent divorce, Nicholas is reticent and guarded when it comes to his personal life, but he's no match for Delilah's charm and beauty. Their relationship ignites in a night of passion, but quickly spirals out of control when Nicholas discovers Delilah's got a few secrets of her own. And so, the question is, what if love really doesn't conquer all?

Production Story

The Process

Filming for *Delilah* ran from November 2021 through May 2022 with a gambit of shooting locations throughout New Jersey and New York, lending to the edgy urban feel of the storyline. The film was edited by Corey Brumfield and was released on Valentine's Day 2024 in partnership with Fast Forward Films and the America Nu Network, making it available to subscribers on a myriad of platforms including, Apple TV, Fire TV, Android TV, and Roku. With sound mixing done by hip-hop legend D-Moët, Daniel Ali underscores the film with his own raw, hypnotic original soundtrack that pulsates and bubbles beneath the current of the film.



Jonathan H. Ragins as Nicholas, Michelle Batista as Delilah, and Jason Jeannot as Divine

*Over the course of nearly two years, from conception to completion, Delilah has become as much a part of my life energy as my own beating heart. From sleepless nights, tossing and turning with visions of images on a screen, to the distorted places that are the realities in which I grew up, it brings me back to the pen and the writing of the book, *Across the Middle*, which the film is based upon.*

The underlying theme in both the book and the film was and is nothing less than 100% CREATIVE HONESTY. For far too long, people of color, especially in the United

States, have relied on others to tell OUR stories for us. But how can we ever expect it to be done right if we don't take control of the narrative ourselves? That is what I attempted to do with Delilah.

With the help of a brilliant and varied team, both in front and behind the camera, this film has developed a life of its own; embracing our complex and beautifully flawed humanity in a way that will break your heart and make you believe at the same time. Delilah is a dark, gritty love story that crashes against conventional ideals of relationships, commitment, inner conflict, and the all too often unfamiliar shades of redemption. Delilah sails into murky waters, delving into matters of victim sexuality and drug addiction. And while there will be those who take issue with some of the film's themes, I believe it is important that I be as true to reality as possible. I see it as my creative mission to bring life to art.

This is an intensely personal work for me, but packaged with the viewer in mind and heart, never losing sight of our aim to reach the audience in a meaningful way, allowing them to experience the full range of emotion. Humbly, I believe we have achieved that with this film.

-Daniel Ali, Writer/Director

The GATEKEEPER Team

Founded in 2019, Gatekeeper Creative Works is a collective of like-minded creators, spearheaded by Daniel Ali, as an industry mix of writers, filmmakers, directors, and producers dedicated to the development and showcasing of creative minds, particularly those who reflect the social consciousness of the group and a shared commitment to the Black and Latino communities' diverse experiences. *Delilah* is the second of three films produced under the Gatekeeper Creative Works banner, but it absolutely will not be the last. Several projects are currently in the works, including a dramatic, coming-of-age story called *Her Life*, starring twelve-year-old Isabella Ali and Erika Bermudez, now in production, (2025) and a limited series called *The Psychiatrist*, starring Jonathan H. Ragins, lead actor in *Delilah*, which is in pre-production and expected in 2026.

“I know I don’t fit or follow the conventional mode of how you’re supposed to make an independent film, and there’s always somebody around to try and tell you what you can and can’t do. And just like it was with my first film, Love and the Game, I knew I had a choice. I could either wade through all of the conventional funding channels, which would mean lengthy delays, creative interference from investors, and absolutely no guarantees or I could charge ahead and self-fund the film. If covid taught us nothing else, it is that we are living in a time when unconventionality is where its at. Now is the time to take the bull by the horns and break out of the mold of how things used to be done and create new options and opportunities for us to tell our stories ourselves.” -Daniel Ali

The Gatekeeper Creative Works Team is particularly dedicated to identifying and developing the youth of our community. Inspiring those interested in creative writing and filmmaking and exposing others to the possibilities within the medium. But not just educating and inspiring them to understand what it means for us to tell our own stories but providing them the technical know how to get it done. There are countless numbers of talented, creative young people with something relevant to say, but they simply do not know how to do it. So, it’s our obligation to reach those young people and help them make their voices heard.



On the set with Erika Bermudez and Isabella Ali

The Music

One of the most vital aspects of producing a successful film project is the music associated with it. It speaks to the life of the visuals and creates the feel of the film and its emotions.

“I wanted the music to have a life of its own. I wanted the listener to be able to close their eyes and visualize the story simply by listening to the soundtrack. But it was important that the music was more of a “feeling” thing than a “hearing” thing. It’s feelings that last the longest in our memories.” – Daniel Ali

To achieve that purpose Daniel Ali turned to his lifelong friend and partner, Dwayne Smith, co-founder of Gatekeeper Music and one of the film’s executive producers for the score and soundtrack. With sound mixing done by hip-hop legend D-Moët, Ali underscores the film with his own raw, hypnotic original soundtrack that pulsates and bubbles beneath the current of the film.

In addition to the original music from Daniel Ali, which accounts for the majority of the film score, *Delilah* also features several strong contributions from some of the best independent artists in the New York area to help put the final touches on the sound of *Delilah*. Keeping in the Gatekeeper tradition of providing opportunities for young artists this included up and comer, Diego Vogelmann who provided the tracks *Sold My Soul* and *Love No. 7*. Also featured in the film’s musical body is the sultry and sweet R&B vocal style of Julia with *My Own Shoulder*, Anthony “Boriqua Posse” Quinones with the Latin flavor of *Rumba Rumba*, and the hard driving track, *Ain’t No Second Chances* from Bronx female Hip-Hop artist Nubia The MC.

The diverse musical style selected for the film by Smith and Ali is the perfect blend, and accurately reflects the passionate and often times chaotic, tumultuous nature of Nicholas and *Delilah*’s relationship. The haunting recurring presence of *Delilah*’s theme song, *What’s Hidden* becomes an eerie foretelling reminiscent of the famous theme from *Jaws*. All in all, the music and the film make for a package worth noticing.

Early Response



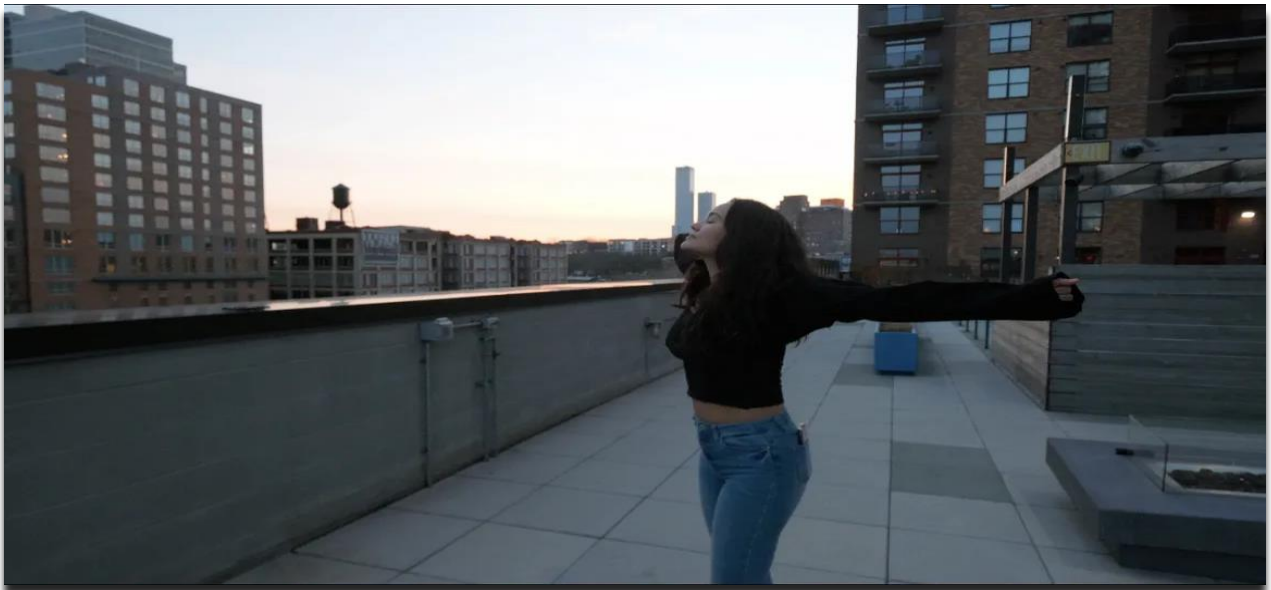
The response to *Delilah*, so far, has been fantastic! As of April 2024, the film has received **Official Selection** honors at the Budapest International Film Festival and is awaiting selection status at several others. The film is distributed in partnership with Fast Forward Films and is currently available on the America Nu Network. Daniel Ali and the Gatekeeper Creative Works team is actively engaged in negotiations to bring the film to other networks.

Lead Actors

“Being a new filmmaker, taking on the responsibility of casting actors to bring the story to life can be an intimidating process.” – Daniel Ali

The trickiest casting challenge we faced in *Delilah* was finding two actors that could bring out the duality in the two main characters. We needed a leading female that could make *Delilah* someone the audience could empathize with despite her life choices. The character of *Delilah* had to be played by a woman who could push the envelope and was skilled enough to have her conflicted vulnerability manifest itself

seemingly unintentionally. She had to possess a strong outward persona rife with cockiness and fits of angry aggression but still be a victim underneath it all which is not an easy thing to pull off. Her male counterpart, Nicholas had to exist in a space of quiet reserve and respectability and a desire to break out of that mold to freely express himself in a way he had never been able to before. We needed to see him gradually being pulled out of his comfort zone into someone and something he'd always wanted to be but never had been. With Jonathan and Michelle, I think we hit the mark with our choices for the lead actors.



Michelle Batista as Delilah

Michelle is a very talented actress from New Jersey, now living and working in New York. She has been featured in several short films and stage productions including *The Walking Nightmare*, *Vignettes*, *The Motherfucker with the Hat*, *Uncle Vanya*, and *Anytown USofA*. She also has a working history with writer/director, Daniel Ali, starring as Paz in *Love and the Game*, (2021).



Jonathan H. Ragins as Nicholas

Jonathan Hamilton Ragins is a New York-based actor by way of Louisiana and Washington, DC. Like many of the best, Jonathan began his acting career on the stage in both New Jersey and New York City. Some of his most recent and notable works include the History Channel docu-series 'The Food That Built America' portraying pioneer Wally Amos, founder of Famous Amos Cookies. He recently played the lead in 'Mikey' which debuted at the New York Short Film Festival in 2022. Delilah is Jonathan's feature film debut in the lead role of Nicholas Alexander.



The Filmmaker

Daniel Ali – Writer, Director, Producer

Daniel is the founder and CEO of Gatekeeper Creative Works, a company dedicated to the development of urban artists and their creative projects. He is the author of the amazon five-star rated novel, Love and the Game, and Across the Middle, which is the basis of this film. Ali also wrote the script for Delilah the Movie and produced it as well. He also produced and co-wrote much of the music with his partner and the film's executive producer, Dwayne Smith.



On the set of Delilah, (November 30, 2021).

Writer's Statement

As a writer, it's always my goal to be as authentic, raw, and honest as possible. Just because we may be engaged in a work of fiction doesn't mean we should lose sight of the reality we live in every day. Art should do more than just reflect reality; it should be used to change it when possible. We should always be pushing the

envelope. I saw Delilah as an opportunity for me to explore those boundaries in a way that was still entertaining and engaging for the viewer.

When I first published the book, *Across the Middle*, I felt confident that I had done a good job, but somewhere in the back of my mind, after the success of my first film, *Love and the Game*, I knew I wanted to do it again. And it all started with that theme, that voice in my head that kept saying, “who, out there, is speaking for us?” You see, I know what’s happening out here. I’ve lived a vigorous life. I’ve loved and been loved. I’ve gone toe to toe with the inner demons of those closest to me and come face to face with the most frightening of them all, my own. I know what drug addiction and abuse looks like up close.

Like Delilah says, “...*What if you could know everything there is to know about the one you love? Would you really want to? And would you still love that person if you did?*” That’s what I’m talking about, telling the truth, and let the chips fall where they may.

I wholeheartedly believe, not only that there’s no reason, but I absolutely have no right to wait for somebody else to tell me what I can or can’t do creatively. Whatever it is you want to do, make a record, a film, recite poetry, paint a picture, write a novel, whatever; if you have the vision and the desire to do it, you have no right to sit on it because somebody else doesn’t see what you see. If we have to self-fund, so be it. Don’t be afraid to step up to the plate and swing for the fences. Even if you strike out, at least you’re in the game.