

HAIR

BAHRAIN

MAIN DATA

Category	Horror
Length	90min
Language	Arabic / English
Shooting format	Digital 4K
Shooting location	Bahrain
Shooting dates	late 2025 - early 2026
Expected date of completion	2026
Stage of production	In development

PRODUCTION

Budget	\$5M
Financing in place	\$2,5M
Production company	Pearl Dust
Workshop & platforms attended	N/A

SYNOPSIS

Noor struggles with severe OCD and germophobia. She is forced to return to Bahrain after her estranged sister, Layal, mysteriously falls into a coma. Accompanied by her supportive American husband, Peter, Noor must confront the traumas she fled from years ago. Upon their arrival, they discover that the building, now consumed by an infestation of black mould, mirrors the decay of Noor's family's past. Peter investigates the source of the infestation, while she becomes haunted by vivid flashbacks of her childhood. As strange events escalate, a monstrous jinn entity known as "Hair" emerges from the shadows. Noor realizes that Hair is a demon that has latched onto Layal, using her as both a host and a bridge to their fractured family. In a desperate battle for survival, Noor is forced to confront not only the monster in the building but also the secrets her family buried long ago.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The inspiration for *Hair* came from my desire to explore the connection between folklore and fear, particularly within Middle Eastern culture. Growing up in Bahrain, I was surrounded by supernatural tales, many of which centered on jinn. One such story led me to create "Hair," a jinn that dwells in the toilets, one of the most vulnerable places. These stories reflect the deep-seated fears and traumas passed down through generations, and I was compelled to bring this folklore to life in a way that transcended traditional horror. I want to tell a story that not only confronts the supernatural but also the psychological darkness within us all. My vision for *Hair* is to create a film that immerses the audience in a world where fear is experienced not just through external forces but through the internal struggles of the characters. This film isn't just about horror; it's about confronting personal fears, past traumas, and the things we often avoid. I want the audience to walk away reflecting on their own experiences, questioning what's real and imagined. As we move forward with the feature, I'm excited to see *Hair* reach global audiences and help elevate Bahraini cinema on the international stage.

CONTACT

Producer - Suha Al Khalifa - suhaalkhalifa@gmail.com

Director - Hamad Abdulla Ali - hamad121a@gmail.com



PRODUCER SUHA AL KHALIFA



Suha is a senior writer at MBC Studios where she co-wrote the smash hit drama *Rashash*. She also wrote episodes of *Devil's Promise*, and the region's first female superhero film, *Saudi Super Mum* and co-authored the novel *Heir of Darkness* (#1 for Amazon's Paranormal Romance, 2020).

She was a psychotherapist specialized in trauma and bereavement in South London. This powerful—and at times dangerous—experience taught her the magic of healing through human connection, which is the powerful empathy rooted in the core of her storytelling.

DIRECTOR HAMAD ABDULLA ALI



Hamad Abdulla is an award-winning filmmaker and director with extensive international experience in the media and entertainment industry. A graduate of Full Sail University with an MFA in Film Production, he has worked on over 80 projects—including films, TV shows, music videos, and commercials—across Hollywood, Bahrain, and other countries, excelling as a producer, writer, and production designer. He also serves as a Film Instructor at the American University of Bahrain, where he mentors the next generation of filmmakers. Hamad's work has earned him numerous accolades, including regional Emmys and recognition for his contributions to youth development and the creative arts.

2025
PAS DUBAÏ X STUDIO CITY WORKSHOP

LETTER TO LAYLA

رسالة لليلى

QATAR

MAIN DATA

Category	Drama
Length	90min
Language	Arabic
Shooting format	Digital 4K or 6K
Shooting location	Qatar
Shooting dates	N/A
Expected date of completion	Early 2028
Stage of production	In development

PRODUCTION

Budget	2,922,000€
Financing in place	25,000€
Production company	The Film House
Workshop & platforms attended	N/A

SYNOPSIS

In a city divided by memory and identity, Bilal, a gifted Qanun soloist, is dismissed from his orchestra, forcing him to give up his music license and memories tied to the place he grew up, married, and raised his daughter. Determined to preserve his family's identity, he steals his Qanun and records a solo with a memory smuggler. A violent raid disrupts his plan, forcing him and his daughter, Layla, to flee to the slums of Adim. There, an enigmatic man offers to immortalize their memories through a revolutionary serum. As the Memory Brigade closes in, Bilal plays a final, heartfelt solo, risking everything to protect his legacy.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Growing up in the Gulf, I didn't fully grasp the transient nature of life as a resident. Only later did I realize how deeply tied one's presence can be to his work status. After 20 years here, the thought of leaving behind the memories of my childhood and youth feels like erasing my identity to preserve another's. This dynamic, stark in the Gulf where nations guard collective memory, is universal—identities are often built by erasing others.

Letter to Layla explores this through Bilal, a musician fighting to preserve his family's memories in a city that denies him the right to do so. As a Khademi, his residency ends with his service, and recording music becomes his defiant act of survival. Through Bilal's journey and encounters with those shaping or resisting the city's narrative, the story examines memory, identity, and power.

For me, this film preserves the memories of a city I've lived in but cannot truly call home, showing that humanity endures even when identity is erased.

CONTACT

Producer - Cindy Le Templier - cindy@thefilmhouse.tv

Director - Yassine Wahrani - yassine.oah@gmail.com



PRODUCER CINDY LE TEMPLIER



Cindy Le Templier is a French and Jordanian producer based in Doha, Qatar. After completing her degree in Multimedia Production, Cindy worked on numerous Feature Films in France across multiple departments, alongside renowned and award-winning directors such as Bruno Dumont, Christian Vincent, Cedric Klapisch, Claude Miller, Eric Toledano and Olivier Nakache. In 2011, she relocated to the Middle East, where she co-founded SHASHAT Multimedia Productions, one of the most successful production houses in Amman-Jordan at the time, where she led the production of many TV series and shows, commercials and TVCs, and several feature films, including the documentary *Uncle Nashaat* and the feature *Line of Sight*. In 2021 Cindy joined 'The Film House' in Doha, where she continues to work on different film, TV, and digital projects. She now leads creative ventures at 'The Film House' in Doha as Head of development of 'TFH Originals', with the goal of producing innovative films and digital projects across the region. Currently, she is producing *Jodari Meno'* a documentary directed by Jamal Al Khanji and *When the fire burnt the sun* a short film directed by Yassine Ouahrani, while steering the development of compelling MENA based stories.

DIRECTOR YASSINE WAHRANI



Yassine Wahrani is a French-Moroccan screenwriter and director based in Doha, Qatar. Holding a degree in Communications from Northwestern University, he joined the Doha Film Institute in 2019. There, he serves as a coordinator for the grants program and the Qumra industry event. Yassine is currently developing his third short fiction film, titled *When the Fire Burnt the Sun*.

WHAT IF?

ماذا لو؟

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

MAIN DATA

Category	Drama, Comedy
Length	100min
Language	Arabic
Shooting format	ARRIRAW (4.5K native resolution)
Shooting location	UAE
Shooting dates	N/A
Expected date of completion	June 2026
Stage of production	In development

PRODUCTION

Budget	N/A
Financing in place	N/A
Production company	Starship Entertainment
Workshop & platforms attended	N/A

SYNOPSIS

The film follows Sara, a 35-year-old Emirati woman trapped in a toxic corporate world while dreaming of acting on stage—a passion that challenges societal norms and risks alienation. As her marriage falters under the strain of her ambitions and her husband's desire to start a family, Sara grapples with the tension between societal expectations and personal fulfillment. Encouraged by friends, she auditions for a theater production, finding liberation in the raw beauty of performance but facing sacrifices that test her resilience. Amid self-doubt, societal judgment, and marital strain, Sara's journey is a testament to embracing one's truth and the courage to pursue an uncertain but authentic path.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This story resonates deeply with me because it reflects the internal and external battles many women in the MENA region face. It's a journey of balancing societal expectations with personal aspirations—choosing between a stable income and pursuing a career you love, navigating everyday marital struggles and questioning whether to stay, and embarking on a path of self-discovery to find joy in life's smallest moments. Sara's passion for acting on stage, a profession that exposes her to judgment and alienation in her community, mirrors the challenges women face when choosing a path of self-expression and individuality in a world that often imposes limits on them. Her story reflects themes of resilience, creativity, and courage in pursuing a calling that requires raw vulnerability and emotional authenticity. Acting as a profession is inherently visual and emotionally charged, providing a unique lens to explore Sara's struggles with mental health, societal pressures, and personal growth, all wrapped in an engaging and entertaining story.

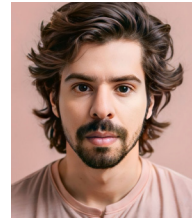
CONTACT

Producer - Yasir Alyasiri - yasir.alyasiri@starship.ae

Director - Mariam Alserkal - mariam@tripletonset.com



PRODUCER YASIR ALYASIRI



Yasir Al Yasiri is a celebrated filmmaker with over 20 years of experience as a director, producer, and writer, known for his award-winning work across film and television. His portfolio includes the globally acclaimed *On Borrowed Time*, the Egyptian blockbuster *122*, and the groundbreaking Lionsgate Starzplay series *Kaboos*. In 2024, he brought the Saudi fantasy film *HWJN* to life, blending cultural depth with cinematic innovation. With a passion for storytelling that inspires and challenges, Yasir continues to leave a mark on the global filmmaking industry.

DIRECTOR MARIAM ALSERKAL



Mariam Al Serkal is an Emirati producer and director with over 20 years of experience crafting impactful stories that blend documentary and drama, often highlighting women's issues and underrepresented voices. As one of the few Emirati women leading in film direction, her work includes *Unveiling Selma*, which gained international recognition at festivals in France, Morocco, Italy, and Al Ain, and *London in a Headscarf*, which premiered at the London MENA Film Festival and was recognized at DIFF. A media pioneer since 2003, Mariam has held leadership roles at Majid, Twofour54's Creative Lab, and ShoofTV, and was the youngest female TV director at 20. She now leads Triplets on Set, her boutique production company dedicated to creating authentic, bespoke content. Mariam earned her Master of Arts in Filmmaking from the London Film School.

THE CAVE

كراير

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

MAIN DATA

Category	Drama, Post-Apocalyptic
Length	90min
Language	Arabic
Shooting format	Digital 4K
Shooting location	Jordan
Shooting dates	February 2027
Expected date of completion	November 2027
Stage of production	In development

PRODUCTION

Budget	534,105€
Financing in place	N/A
Production company	Slate Film / Jazz Films
Workshop & platforms attended	N/A

SYNOPSIS

A modern man meets a caveman in the aftermath of a war where a biological weapon regressed humanity into its primitive form, back to Cavemen, hunched, apelike, and almost walking on all fours. The story follows a lone survivor, known as the Man in the Cave (MIC), who sets out on a mission to civilize and teach this caveman the meaning of humanity. The M.I.C. collects remnants of the old world—letters, photographs, and music—desperately trying to reconnect with the lost aspects of humanity. Through a series of small diegetic flashbacks and moments in the past, the mystery of who MIC is and what happened to the world around him is slowly unveiled. Revealing a secret that he carries with a heavy heart, and why he feels the need to believe that there is more to humanity than what is left.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Every time I hear a tragic war story, I find myself questioning: What drives humanity to such destruction and killing? Are we innately civilized beings, or are we ruled by primal instincts? Is violence, greed, and the lust for power born from calculated strategy, or does it stem from raw, animalistic impulses? I deeply believe in the power of fables and folk tales—simple stories that carry profound moral lessons. This fascination, combined with my questions about violence and human behavior, inspired the creation of the two central characters in my film. One represents the primitive side of humanity, while the other embodies a broken, modern man whose world has been shattered by war. Their confrontation serves as a metaphorical exploration of these themes, driving the narrative and examining where we stand on humanity's moral compass.

CONTACT

Producer - Razan Takash - razan.takash@gmail.com

Director - Nechteh Apelian - apelianneo@gmail.com



PRODUCER RAZAN TAKASH



Razan Takash is an award-winning producer and director from Jordan. She has an experience of over 12 years in the Middle East Film and Production Industry & 5 years in higher education teaching film and television production. Currently, she is Head of Film at SAE Dubai.

Razan holds a Masters in Fine Arts from the Red Sea Institute for Cinematic Arts (RSICA) in Jordan as part of a film MFA program under USC.

In 2016, she wrote and directed the winning film *Shah Mat* which received the 1st place award at the 48hour Film Project Dubai, where she also received awards for "Best Director" and "Best Special Effects/Post -Production". In 2020 she was nominated for the Mary Shelley Award at Other Worlds Austin film festival, which is awarded to the artist whose film best furthers the involvement and representation of women in genre filmmaking. Her latest short science fiction film *Midas* has found success in more than 24 international film festivals and has won 14 awards including Best Sci-fi short at Florence Film Awards and Berlin Movie Awards, Silver Award the Hollywood Gold Awards and Best Female Director at the Indie Filmmaker awards.

DIRECTOR NEO APELIAN



Neo Apelian is an Armenian Lebanese Filmmaker based in Dubai with over 8 years of experience, in the field of film and video production. A graduate of the American University in Dubai's Digital production & Storytelling program, at Mohamed bin Rashed School

of Communication (MBRSC). He has since worked on the sets of various local and international commercials, short films, and feature films. Most notably, *Star Trek: Beyond* 2016 and *The Ambush* 2021. Gaining his experience in the production department, before slowly transitioning into writing and directing his own films. In 2019, Apelian produced the short film *Midas* with Jordanian film director Razan Takash. The film screened in over 25 festivals worldwide and won 10 awards including Best Sci-fi short at Florence Film Awards and Berlin Movie Awards. Neo made his directorial debut with the quirky Sci-fi short film *IDI* in January 2021, and since, *IDI* has officially being selected in over 15 festivals worldwide. Winning 11 awards including the Gold Award for First Time Director, at the Hollywood Gold Festival.

KAMADEV

GOD OF LOVE

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

MAIN DATA

Category	Drama
Length	180 mins
Language	Hindi
Shooting format	Digital
Shooting location	India
Shooting dates	January 2026
Expected date of completion	January 2027
Stage of production	In development

PRODUCTION

Budget	670,000 €
Financing in place	10,000 €
Production company	Shoot At Sight Productions
Workshop & platforms attended	N/A

SYNOPSIS

At 65, Indira Sharma is a widow bound by tradition in a conservative Delhi household in India. Her life revolves around her sons, daughters-in-law, and grandson, until her daughter-in-law Ragini secretly introduces her to Kamadev, a 'Make-In-India' dating app. What begins as a hesitant curiosity under the radar of her family, soon becomes a quiet revolution. Guided by Ragini and her mischievous grandson Rocky, Indira steps into an unfamiliar world of online dating, discovering awkward first encounters, fleeting connections, and tender moments of intimacy. Along the way, she begins to question the societal norms that have long defined her existence. As her sons struggle with the idea of their mother seeking independence, Indira finds love after the reappearance of Ram, a widower who reawakens her hope. Set against the backdrop of New Delhi, the film subtly explores themes of companionship, independence, and the quiet rebellion of a generation that is often overlooked.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I grew up in a joint family in Mumbai, India, surrounded by single mothers who were either separated or widowed. They remained single for the rest of their lives. I often wondered if their desires quieted under the weight of their responsibilities. Years later, I was struck by a moment in Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Glass Palace*, where an elderly couple's dentures become entangled in a glass container as they wake up together in bed. Since then, I've been fascinated by the idea of telling a story about the complexities of finding love and intimacy at a later stage in life. When your skin is no longer taut, when your bones are frail, when intimacy requires a new choreography. I want to create a film where audiences connect emotionally with the characters while finding moments of levity in their struggles. *Kamadev (God of Love)* is a coming-of-age story about a 65-year-old widow exploring online dating in secret. The protagonist, Indira Sharma, represents many women I've known over the years.

CONTACT

Producer - Fahad Shaikh - fahad@shootatsight.com

Director - Swapna Kurup - swapna.tsk@gmail.com

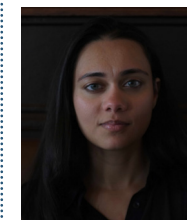


PRODUCER FAHAD SHAIKH



Fahad Shaikh, involved since his teens in the South Asian media and theatre space, has recently achieved significant milestones in his career. As a Producer, his latest triumph is the acclaimed feature film *Pinky Memsaab*, which has garnered praise in cinemas and is now streaming on Netflix. Prior to this, Fahad collaborated with 25 directors worldwide on the feature *The Owner*, that had earned a Guinness World Record in 2012. He has also directed and produced documentaries for institutions like the Scottish Documentary Film Institute and Imagination Abu Dhabi. Earlier, Fahad gained recognition for his independent short film *The Veil* (2006), which received awards at the WorldFest Houston Film Festival. His cinematic journey began with the creation of the silent short film *A Dollar Bill* (2002) during a workshop in Houston. Throughout his career, Fahad's dedication to storytelling has propelled him forward, establishing him as a respected figure in the industry.

DIRECTOR SWAPNA KURUP



Swapna Kurup is an Indian-origin filmmaker and writer residing in the UAE. She deeply engages with communities before bringing their stories to the screen. Swapna has been commissioned by Image Nation Abu Dhabi and Dubai Culture. Her films have bagged awards at the Chicago South Asian Film Festival 2021, San Francisco Short Film Festival 2018, Arab Film Studio 2017 and Imagine Science Abu Dhabi 2018. Her films, *Ranapakshara* and *Ela: Breaking Boundaries*, have been featured at various international film festivals and cultural events, including the Sheffield Doc Fest, Manarat Al Saadiyat and the Video Consortium New York.

AL-MADEENEH 2008

YEMEN

MAIN DATA

Category	Drama
Length	90 mins
Language	Arabic
Shooting format	Digital 4K
Shooting location	Yemen
Shooting dates	N/A
Expected date of completion	2027
Stage of production	In development

PRODUCTION

Budget	\$ 722,000
Financing in place	\$ 65,000
Production company	Semasser LLC
Workshop & platforms attended	AFLAMUNA x Cinamed Encounters 2024 CineGouna Funding Platform 2024

SYNOPSIS

When Fuad loses yet another job in an already scarce market, he finally decides to leave Al-Madeeneh, a crumbling old town he helped maintain with his late father for decades. At the passport agency, a fleeting connection with a woman named Wedad, who shares her phone number, pulls him back, prompting him to forsake his plans of leaving. But three days into their phone-talking relationship, Fuad's phone is stolen, sending him on a frantic search to reclaim the only thing tying him to her.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This story is a collage of real-life events that I piece together by fusing the past with my memory, creating a time capsule and a portrait of my hometown. The formative teenage years of my life were spent there and it seemed as if nothing works in this place and that everything was soon coming to an end. There was defeat, false hopes, fear all mixed in the air of the town. I am still realizing how that period shaped my sense of fear and skepticism toward the world.

I'm also very fascinated by that period—the people's routines, how they dressed and expressed themselves, and the wealth of individuals who had character. The film unfolds in the span of days, and the sense of real-time here is an important element not only because it allows me to show the anatomy of a Yemeni day with its unique structure and events. I am interested in recreating memories we tend to forget, the little details in everyday life that make up the bigger picture.

CONTACT

Producer - Ala'a Amer - alaa.dammaj@gmail.com

Director - Yousef Assabahi - yusuf.alsabahi@gmail.com



PRODUCER ALA'A AMER



Ala'a Amer is a Yemeni-American producer specializing in international production of films and branded content, a few of which are award-winning. She holds a Producing Certificate from UCLA, an MBA, and has significant business management experience. Currently, she's developing her feature debut, *Al-Madeeneh 2008*, after producing four shorts in Yemen.

DIRECTOR YOUSEF ASSABAH



Yousef Assabahi is a Yemeni writer and director based in Los Angeles. He has made several short films and commercials that explore cultural identity and collective memory of Yemenis at home and abroad. Currently, Yousef serves as the head of Oral History department for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, while developing his first feature film.