

2026 Dubai · PaS Workshop

BENEATH THE ZAFRON SKY

UAE | IRAN

MAIN DATA

Category	Family, Drama
Length	90 min
Language	Farsi
Shooting format	Digital 4K
Shooting location	Tehran
Shooting dates	September - Nov 2027
Expected date of completion	February 2028
Stage of production	In development

PRODUCTION

Budget	500 000 €
Financing in place	
Production company	Eldest Sister
Workshop & platform attended	Writing Workshop : 2026 Film and TV Script Development Workroom Arab Film Studio Feature Writing Workshop

SYNOPSIS

Beneath the Zafron Sky follows Abbas and Neda, a formerly comfortable couple with two children, forced to leave their privileged life in northern Tehran for Abbas's crumbling childhood villa in the city's struggling southern district. What begins as a temporary relocation soon tests their resilience, as they try to mask their sudden fall from grace with forced optimism. Amid the pressures of a shifting economy and a rapidly changing society, cracks emerge within the family. What starts as a struggle to preserve tradition and dignity gradually becomes a bittersweet exploration of identity, love, and the meaning of staying together when everything else is falling apart.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Every summer, when I return to Tehran, I find myself on the same path, from the airport straight to the little grocery store on the corner of my neighbourhood. That shop has always been my gateway back into the city. Its owner, with his endless stories, is like an oracle of the street, carrying more dramatic news than a Spanish Telenovelas. From him, and from the neighbours who gather there, I hear the stories that shape our community.

This film is born out of those stories of lives I've witnessed, or overheard. None of the characters are imagined; they are drawn from the real faces I encounter each summer. What captivates me most is not the struggles themselves, but the way my neighbours meet them: the arguments that turn into laughter, the moments of anger that lead to forgiveness.

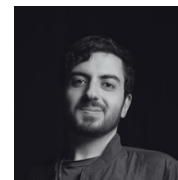
I want to tell this story because it reflects a truth I carry with me everywhere that the human experience is universally shared. The challenges of one Tehran alley are smilier to those of countless other streets around the world. What makes these stories special to me is ordinary people, faced with misfortune, continue to find strength in one another. For me, cinema is a way to honour that spirit. It is a way to say that no matter how small or overlooked a life may seem, within it lies a world of meaning and beauty. This film is my attempt to capture that to express the everyday struggle and the quiet heroism of forgiveness into a story that, while born in my neighbourhood, belongs to everyone.

CONTACT

Producer - Lubna Bagsair - lubna.bagsair@gmail.com
Director - Sayed Mousavi - Sayedmousavi@outlook.com



DIRECTOR SAYED MOUSAVI



Sayed is a Tehran-born filmmaker raised in the UAE. His passion for storytelling began at fifteen when he enrolled at the New York Film Academy. What started as curiosity has grown into a lasting commitment to cinema. While studying in

Malaysia, he directed several short films, exploring narrative structure and visual language. Moving into the role of Assistant Director, Sayed gained valuable on-set experience while continuing to develop independent projects. His latest short, Haj Ahmed, reflects his evolving craft. Sayed's goal is to inspire and emotionally engage audiences while entertaining them through the medium of film.

PRODUCER LUBNA BAGSAIR



Lubna Bagsair is a Sudanese writer and producer based in Dubai. Her previous films have won awards and screened at festivals in the MENA region and abroad including Red Sea, DOC NYC, Al Ain FF, and more. With a background in

documentary filmmaking, Lubna is able to draw from real stories and experiences, adding realism to the stories she brings to life. Previously, Lubna worked for 8 years at the leading UAE based studio Image Nation Abu Dhabi, where she played a crucial role in developing narrative and documentary films. She also worked as a Creative Manager at MBC Studios where she focuses on feature film and television development. She is an alum of Film Independent's Global Media Makers program and the Middle East Media Initiative. Lubna has a bachelor's degree in journalism and a master's degree in film and spent her first year of her working life as a crime reporter.

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COLORED SWEETS

UAE | INDIA

MAIN DATA

Category	Drama, Children, War.
Length	90 min
Language	Kashmiri, Urdu, Arabic
Shooting format	Digital, 2K DCP, Atmos
Shooting location	India
Shooting dates	January - March 2027
Expected date of completion	December 2027
Stage of production	Pre production

PRODUCTION

Budget	504 201 €
Financing in place	165 980 €
Production company	Jungle Book Studio / Singing Owl Films
Workshop & platform attended	BAFA, Busan South Korea, Winner of Sharjah Art Foundation Feature film fund

SYNOPSIS

Set in the winter of 1995, Colored Sweets follows orphans Hasan and Zahra in a remote Kashmiri village as they wait for their father, missing in the war. During Eid, they hear of "Colored Sweets"—candies said to make dreams come true. Believing these can bring their father back.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I am a filmmaker who tells stories from conflict zones. No matter the setting, one truth remains: children always suffer. This has become the central theme of my work because wars have persisted since the day I was born. Each of my films, whether set in Kashmir, Syria, Sudan, or Ukraine, serves as an anti-war statement, reminding us that the most innocent carry the deepest scars.

I grew up with the echoes of war, yet what lingers in my memory are not explosions, but the silences that followed—families waiting and children chasing fleeting joy. Colored Sweets grows from those memories. It is a film about absence: the absence of a father, of certainty, and of sweetness. Hasan and Zahra's quest for colored sweets is more than a child's whim; it is a way to fill a void with the hope that joy still exists.

My visual approach is rooted in intimacy. The camera stays low, observing the world through the children's eyes. War is never shouted; it lingers in locked doors and empty chairs. Silence and sound—the azaan, Sufi chants, and the hum of markets—are vital to preserving the memory of a place.

The sweets are not the goal, but an excuse to keep moving and resist despair through imagination. In their journey, something vital grows: resilience and the fragile beauty of kindness. Colored Sweets is a testament to the small hopes that sustain life, proving that even in the darkest winters, the human spirit seeks light.

CONTACT

Producer - Gaurav Dhingra - gaurav@jbepi.com
Director - Mohamad W. Ali - mohamad0ali92@gmail.com



DIRECTOR MOHAMAD W. ALI



Mohamad W. Ali is a Syrian filmmaker based in the UAE whose work draws from lived experiences in war zones and the quiet resilience of everyday life. After studying Mass Media in Syria, he honed his craft in Film Direction and Screenplay Writing at India's SRFTI.

During eight years in South Asia, Ali worked on various international productions, focusing on bridging Arab and South Asian cinematic perspectives. His films, which explore themes of childhood, memory, and displacement, have received 16 awards and screened at over 100 festivals. Notably, he is the first Arab filmmaker to direct Arabic fiction in India and South Korea. He is currently developing his debut feature, supported by the Sharjah Art Foundation and the Cannes Marché du Film.

PRODUCER GAURAV DHINGRA



Gaurav Dhingra is an international film and TV producer from India, known for bold, globally resonant stories. His latest film, Stolen, premiered at Venice (La Biennale), screened at 25+ major festivals, and released

worldwide on Amazon Prime in 2025. His notable credits include Angry Indian Goddesses (TIFF, Netflix), Peddlers (Cannes), Faith Connections (TIFF), Haramkhor, and V Mahakaya. He also produced the first India-New Zealand co-production, Beyond The Known World. With over two decades of experience, Gaurav has produced major international productions across India and South Asia and continues to champion his vision: Indian stories for the world.

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GREEN CORPSE

جثمان أخضر
SAUDI ARABIA

MAIN DATA

Category	Fiction, Drama
Length	90 min
Language	Arabic
Shooting format	
Shooting location	Saudi Arabia
Shooting dates	Nov- dec 2026
Expected date of completion	April 2027
Stage of production	In development

PRODUCTION

Budget	2 503 125 €
Financing in place	128 125 €
Production company	Vues Consultancy & Film Production
Workshop & platform attended	Torino Film Lab & Red Sea Feature Film Program Saudi Film Festival (2 Awards) Red Sea International Film Festival - Souk

SYNOPSIS

In the heart of Jizan, Malek, a teenage sprinter chasing a championship, is pulled back by his father, who smuggles a prohibited plant in a mortuary van. Between a father's love and the threat of stigma, Malek fights not to inherit his family's sins.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

At its core, Green Corpse is the story of a family drowning in debt and desperation, told through the eyes of Malek, a teenage runner whose talent could be his ticket out if the world would let him escape. The story exposes how systemic poverty and familial bonds can simultaneously sustain and strangle dreams.

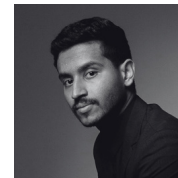
Green Corpse isn't just about crime; it's about how poverty and obligation distort love. Malek isn't a hero, he's a boy who tries to be one, and pays the price. The film asks: How much of yourself would you destroy for family? And when does loyalty become a death sentence? What about the history, is it a loop? or a linear? or maybe a circle that Malik is trying to break! The green corpse isn't just qat - it's the wasted potential of generations. Between Chasing and Escaping, Malek runs away from reality while chasing a future that may not exist.

CONTACT

Producer - Bakr Alduhaim - Bakr@vues.sa
Director - Khaled Zidan - k.zidan.dp@gmail.com



DIRECTOR KHALED ZIDAN



Independent filmmaker of both fiction and documentary films, with a background as a cinematographer and editor. Director of more than 7 short films over the past decade that awarded across several International Film Festivals.

PRODUCER BAKR ALDUHAIM



Bakr Alduhaim is a Saudi producer with a distinguished career in cinema, he graduated from École Internationale de Création Audiovisuelle et de Réalisation in Paris. Then he founded Vues, a company focused on building a cultural bridge between Saudi Arabia and the world.

ZARHA OF THE MOUNTAIN

OMAN

MAIN DATA

Category	Drama
Length	100 min
Language	Arabic
Shooting format	Oman
Shooting location	2027
Shooting dates	2028
Expected date of completion	
Stage of production	In development

PRODUCTION

Budget	355 321 €
Financing in place	
Production company	SURUJ Film Production
Workshop & platform attended	NFTS, Feature Film Lab

SYNOPSIS

In 2007, Zahra, a 45-year-old self-taught Omani woman, ends her voluntary summer classes in Al Hamra town after receiving a temporary government teaching job. There, she discovers that children from remote mountain villages struggle with basic literacy. Visiting their parents, she realizes the problem runs deeper—the mothers themselves are illiterate. Zahra quits her job and opens a small mountain classroom, funding the classes by running a small kitchen business. Just as her work begins to grow, Cyclone Gonu destroys her kitchen, cutting off her income. Devastated, Zahra nearly gives up, until village women unite to support her, turning her effort into a lasting community movement of education and resilience.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I first saw Zahra in a television interview in 2020. Her voice was calm, but her story shook me. A mother of seven, forced to leave school at the age of 12, she taught herself how to read and write, and then turned that knowledge into a teaching mission.

Zahra didn't just teach a few people; she opened 23 classrooms across 23 mountain villages in Oman, all funded by income from her home kitchen.

I knew then that my first feature film had to be about this remarkable woman.

When I met Zahra in person, she welcomed me with stories that never seemed to end — rich with detail, emotion, and hope. A storyteller by nature, her journey is both deeply personal and powerfully universal.

In this film, I want to focus on her early journey: Zahra's struggle to open her first two classrooms, build her kitchen to fund them, and face the logistical and personal challenges along the way. This is not a documentary, but a lyrical fiction inspired by her life. I want the audience to feel her quiet strength, the early mornings, the cooking, the mountain climbs, and the joy of seeing an 80-year-old woman write her name for the first time.

Visually, the film will lean toward natural light, real locations, and intimate handheld camera work. Performances will be grounded and realistic, using local dialects to reflect the authenticity of Zahra's world.

This film is a tribute to those who never had the chance to learn, and to every woman who dares to begin change from her own doorstep.

CONTACT

Producer - Suliman Al Hatmi - ssalhatmi321@gmail.com
Director - Sultan Al Qamshouai - sultaneseq@gmail.com



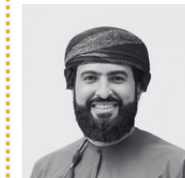
DIRECTOR SULTAN AL QAMSHOUAI



Sultan Al Qamshouai (b. 1990) is an independent writer and director from Oman. He studied screenwriting at NFTS and began his filmmaking career in 2015. Since then, he has directed several short films, including Makhtoob (2025) and

the Green Box (2023), Winner of Best Cinematography at Ayn Film Festival and screened at six international festivals, among them the Saudi Film Festival. In addition to his narrative work, Sultan has produced a range of commercial, documentary, and digital projects. He is currently developing his debut feature film, Zahra of the Mountain, continuing his exploration of Omani culture through compelling storytelling and a distinctive cinematic vision.

PRODUCER SULIMAN AL HATMI



Sulaiman Al-Hatmi is an independent film director and producer with over nine years of experience in the field of visual content creation. His work spans a variety of formats, including commercials, music videos, short films,

documentaries, and narrative projects, with a portfolio of more than 80 visual works. He began his career as a cinematographer before gradually transitioning into directing and producing—an evolution that provided him with a deep understanding of both the technical and artistic dimensions of filmmaking. In addition to his creative practice, he served as director of the Qadi Film Festival, a local initiative dedicated to supporting independent cinema and emerging talent.

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NAYDALAAN

YEMEN | QATAR | UAE | JORDAN

MAIN DATA

Category	Magical-Trauma, Fantasy, Adventure
Length	120 min
Language	Arabic
Shooting format	Digital 4K / HD
Shooting location	Yemen/Qatar/UAE/Jordan
Shooting dates	Late 2027
Expected date of completion	2028 - 2029
Stage of production	In development

PRODUCTION

Budget	1 600 000 €
Financing in place	
Production company	Creative Media Solutions
Workshop & platform attended	

SYNOPSIS

Ten-year-old Nadia slips into NAYDALAAN, a non-linear nightmare world where time fractures and childhood fears take form. As she moves through shifting dreamscapes rooted in different eras and regions of the southern Arabian Peninsula, Nadia encounters other girls, each navigating the world through her own neurodivergent lens, often guided by music and whimsical animals. With no adults to guide them, the children learn to communicate, connect, and confront fear together, transforming the nightmare into a space of survival and shared memory. NAYDALAAN is a visually poetic, emotionally layered journey where fantasy becomes a language for history, identity, and the quiet power of growing up.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I grew up on the outskirts of Sana'a in a small village called Al-Ishahs, which translates to "The Huts." From a young age, I navigated two identities: speaking Russian at home with my mother while embracing Yemeni traditions in the world outside. I often felt out of place, growing up in a patriarchal society where I was always secondary to my older brother. As a neurodivergent child, I took on responsibilities beyond my years, effectively parenting my mother from a young age, acting as her personal translator and bridge into a world very different from her own. This duality and responsibility profoundly shaped me, and I often turned to stories to make sense of my fragmented reality. Films and television became a lifeline, transporting me beyond my immediate surroundings and inspiring me to craft my own stories.

NAYDALAAN is born from that experience, of living between contrasting worlds, processing unspoken emotions, and finding refuge in imagination. Nadia's journey mirrors my own in many ways: the overstimulation, the need to escape into dreamscapes, and the resilience required to survive circumstances beyond her control. Through Nadia's dreamlike journey, I explore not only my own childhood but also a broader world where imagination, memory, and resilience intersect. This story is deeply personal, rooted in the struggles of my childhood, yet universal in its exploration of trauma, identity, and the power of imagination.

CONTACT

Producer - Bassam Alasad - bassam@cmgulf.tv
Director - Mariam Al-Dhubhani - maa6294@u.northwestern.edu



DIRECTOR MARIAM AL-DHUBHANI



Mariam Al-Dhubhani is an award-winning Yemeni-Russian filmmaker, curator, and educator. A three-time TEDx speaker and VR storytelling pioneer, she amplifies marginalized voices and challenges

mainstream narratives. Her films have received multiple accolades, including the Most Promising Filmmaker award at the Toronto Arab Film Festival (2019). Named a Rising Star in both Qatar and Egypt, she is among the voices shaping contemporary Arab and African cinema. She is currently completing her feature debut, showcased at Cannes, IDFA, and Venice.

PRODUCER BASSAM ALASAD



Bassam Alasad is a producer, green production consultant, cultural organiser, and member of the global Climate Storytellers Network - GCSN, Producers Guild of America, and DAE. Currently, Alasad is

working as the Managing Director of Creative Media Solutions, a Dubai-based media company.

He has co-produced projects around the region in the past 17 years. His latest projects include "Born a King - 2019", "Champions - 2021" and "Sink - 2025" as a co-producer, and he is currently producing the upcoming feature films "Jo of Montreal" by Ameen Nayfeh and "Finding Oum Al Ghaith" by Abeer Bayazidi, alongside other projects in development.

In 2014, Bassam began his green production journey and later co-founded Greener Screen, a consultancy that supports the film industry in the region in achieving carbon neutrality. Bassam Alasad has headed the Amman Film Industry Days at the AIFF since 2021.