



Get The CGP Rolling

Mina Habib

“It has been a challenging year full of doubts but with everyone's participation it became possible

After a successful 5th edition, GFF's CineGouna Platform wrapped up its program with a closing ceremony, which took place on October 21 at El Gouna Conference and Culture Center. The closing ceremony began with a speech by Intishal Al-Timimi, Festival Director, where he praised all the participating film projects; also he thanked the team of GFF for their efforts and all the sponsors for their full support to art and creativity. Meanwhile, GFF Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer Bushra Rozza, began by thanking the team behind CineGouna, mentioning the

amount of effort that was translated into this success. She added that it has been a challenging year full of doubts and hitches, but with everyone's participation and patience it became possible and the festival was carried out under a very planned organization.

US Ambassador in Cairo Jonathan Cohen spoke about the vital role of cinema and filmmaking in connecting countries. He thanked the festival management and everyone who made it possible in helping to connect Egyptian and American cultures. He stressed on the support provided by the US Embassy to filmmakers in

Egypt by linking them with American directors.

As it wraps up, CGP presented two US \$15,000 prizes to its best project in development and best film in post-production, while additional cash grants and awards were given from CGP's sponsors and partners. For its 5th edition, CineGouna Platform's CineGouna SpringBoard had a selection of 13 projects in development (8 feature narratives and 5 feature documentaries) and 6 films in post-production (2 feature narratives and 4 feature documentaries), in addition to one guest film in post-production.

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20 Cinematic Projects in Development and in Post-production The CGP Winners Revealed

Nada Abdel Kader

Committed to its goal of creating a platform for individuals and cinematic markets, GFF's industry arm CineGouna Platform continues to encourage Arab filmmakers and support their projects in development and films in post-production. CGP offers two programs, CineGouna SpringBoard and CineGouna Bridge, which aim to offer opportunities for learning and participation.

Marking its last day in its 5th edition this year, CineGouna Platform held its closing ceremony at El Gouna Conference and Culture Center, where the committee for projects and films announced the awards for this year's edition.

This year, CGP has 20 cinematic projects, of which 13 are projects in development and 6 films in post-production, in addition to one guest film in post-production. CGP's awards amount up to US \$300,000.

Participating directors and producers in CineGouna SpringBoard presented their films to producers, organizations, distributors, and festival programmers to get their artistic guidance. In addition to that, one-on-one meetings between filmmakers and industry experts, and consultants to develop scripts and incomplete films as well as increase chances for international and regional collaborations.

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The CineGouna SpringBoard jury included Lebanese producer and film critic Mohamed Soueid, former CEO of the NFDC from 2006 until 2018 Nina Lath Gupta, and Moroccan director and screenwriter Ismaël Ferroukhi.

The jury praised the selected films and its filmmakers in its final statement, stating that the quality of the films made choosing the winners a difficult but nonetheless rewarding task. Additionally, the jury gave a Special Mention to *Abo Zabaal* 1989 (Egypt) by Bassam Mortada for its ability to create a home for memories and surpassing the filmmaker's own understanding of his life's events, which were portrayed from the perspectives of his parents.

A Quarter to Thursday in Algiers (France) by Sofia Djama won the Best Project in Development award, which amounts to a cash prize of US \$15,000 and a CineGouna Platform certificate, while *They Planted Strange Trees* (Palestine) by Hind Shoufani won the Best Film in Post-Production award, which amounted to a CineGouna Platform certificate and a cash prize of US \$15,000 and The Indie Deer's cash grant of US \$10,000.

Moreover, the winning projects and films of the cash grants and awards given by CineGouna Platform's sponsors were announced:

Fifty Meters (Egypt) by Yomna Khattab won a US \$10,000 full film promotion package from The Cell Post Production, a US \$10,000 cash grant from Trend VFX, US \$10,000 from Synergy Films, US \$15,000 cash grant for script development from Mariam Naoom and Sard Writing Room, US \$5,000 worth of post-production services

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from BEE Media Productions, and US \$10,000 from Cult. This project also won a chance from Arab Cinema Center to participate in Rotterdam Film Lab.

Haysh Maysh: False Drama (Morocco) by Hicham Lasri won US \$30,000 as a minimum guarantee on film distribution from MAD Solutions and Ergo Media Ventures as well as a US \$5,000 cash grant from Malmö Arab Film Festival.

Aisha Can't Fly Away Anymore (Egypt) by Morad Mostafa won a US \$5,000 cash grant from Gemini Africa as well as EGP 50,000 from The Cell Post Production and was selected for IEFTA's Global Film Expression initiative.

Women of My Life (Iraq, Switzerland) by Zahraa Ghandour won a US \$10,000 cash grant from Maqam Production Films and was also selected for IEFTA's Global Film Expression initiative.

Searching for Woody (Egypt) by Sara Shazli won a US \$5,000 cash grant from BEE Media Productions in addition to US \$1200 worth of services from Clackett.

The US \$50,000 cash grant per sale from OSN prize went to *A Song for Summer and Winter* (Syria, Denmark, Germany, United States) by Talal Derki and Ali Wajeeh. The film also won US \$10,000 worth of a full DCP package from The Cell Post Production.

Hanging Gardens (Iraq, United Kingdom, Palestine) by Ahmed Yassin Al Daradji won a US \$30,000 worth of services and color-grading package from Mercury Visual Solutions, while *Hyphen* (Lebanon) by Reine Razzouk won a US \$10,000 cash grant from Clackett.

Happy Lovers (France, Morocco) by



Hicham Lasri won a US \$10,000 cash grant from Rotana, while Arab Radio and Television Network (ART) gave its US \$10,000 cash grant to SINK (Jordan, Sweden, Canada, France) by Zain Duraie.

My Father's Scent (Egypt) by Mohamed Siam won a US \$10,000 cash grant from New Black, while *The Blind Ferryman - Al Baseer* (Iraq, Switzerland) by Ali Al-Fatlawi won US \$5,000 worth of post-production services by Hecat Studio.



CineGouna Platform is an industry-oriented event created to support and empower Egyptian and Arab filmmakers and help them find artistic and financial support. CineGouna Platform presents the CineGouna SpringBoard and the CineGouna Bridge programs that provide opportunities for sharing and learning.



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Depicting Ancient Egypt in Film



Nada Saad

Under the title: 'Depicting Ancient Egypt in Film', a panel discussion was held today at TU Berlin. With the participation of prominent filmmakers and Egyptologists who raised questions around how ancient Egypt is being depicted in cinema, the panelists are production designer and art

director Onsi Abu Seif, MediaHub co-founder Mohamed Saadi, and Egyptologist Dr. Yasmin El Shazli, with makeup artist turned filmmaker Mahmoud Rashad, and GFF Co-founder and COO Bushra Rozza as its moderators.

Mahmoud Rashad started his conversation that next year will mark the 100th anniversary since the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun by archaeologists, so we need to take advantage of this opportunity, by starting writing and producing short movies that represent this period.

Onsi Abu Seif, added that Shady Abd El Sallam, Egyptian film director, screenwriter and costume and set designer, took into account every little detail, that's why his movies are still a reference for many movie makers, adding that 70% of the movies have false information that's why we need to invest more in the research.

Saadi said the Pharaoh's golden parade is an international event that took months of preparations for the team, the ministries, and government bodies. The country's direction now is to produce movies that boost the country's image, to market our great heritage. He stated that the Ministry of Tourism just issued executive regulations to facilitate the process of filming so the production companies can come to Egypt and film movies here.

A Conversation with Zbigniew Zamachowski

Mina Habib

On CineGouna's last day in the 5th edition of GFF, Audimax Hall at the TU Berlin hosted a masterclass with the renowned film and theatre actor and musician Zbigniew Zamachowski.

The session was moderated by Tharaa Goubail, an Egyptian actress and writer, and Artur Zaborsky, spokesperson for the TOFIFEST International Film Festival. Amir Ramses, Artistic Director of GFF, attended the masterclass, along with numerous media representatives and filmmakers.

Zamachowski started the class by highlighting the impact of working with the legendary director Krzysztof Kieślowski on his career, Zamagowski said, "Kieślowski is a thorough man who is honest with his team and always aims to create a proper working environment. I remember I had a very short scene but I play the main role in it, which includes doing a transaction over the ATM. The script contained codes to help me deal with the machine. I thought I could press any button and no one would care or affect the scene. However, Kieślowski stopped me and asked me to stick to the script and use the written password." Zamachowski added, "I would like to say that it was a great honor to work with the late actor Omar Al Sherif. We met in the mid-eighties and I played a very small role in front of him, but working with him inspired me a lot."

Zamachowski is a two-time winner of the Polish Film Awards. Throughout his illustrious career, he has starred in over 200 Polish and international films.



Nada Abdel Kader

As part of its partnership with Filmlab Palestine, GFF was proud to host Sunbird Stories in its 2nd edition as it aims to support Arab filmmakers in creating stories for Arab youths.

Razan Jammal, Sunbird Stories jury member, said that Sunbird Stories reviewed five projects and chose its winners based on artistic merit, potential impact, and production feasibility. The winners are *Flying Salama* by Mohamed Kateb and Mohamed Kassaby (Egypt) and *The Red Stripe* by Samer Battikhi and Hayat Abu Samra (Jordan).

"The Sunbird Stories program, as well as Filmlab Palestine, is proud and pleased to be hosted by El Gouna Film Festival's CineGouna Platform for the second time in a row," she added.

Schedule

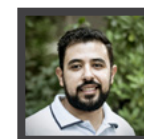
DRIFT AWAY Sea Cinema 1 12:00 PM	ONE SECOND TUB Audimax 12:00 PM	THE FRENCH DISPATCH Sea Cinema 2 12:15 PM	CAPTAINS OF ZAATARI Sea Cinema 3 1:00 PM	Closing Ceremony Festival Plaza 8:00 PM
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'Once Upon a Time in Calcutta' Film Review

A Bleak Portrait of a Metropolis

In his third feature, *Once Upon a Time in Calcutta*, the rising Indian filmmaker, Aditya Vikram Sengupta, presents a sentimental deep analysis of the human's distress in modern times. The film, which opens with death rituals and ends with multiple deaths, encapsulates the atmosphere of bleakness and anguish, yet in a delicate visual storytelling presence.



Mohamed Awad

The story revolves around a group of neatly portrayed characters who live in Calcutta, the capital of India's West Bengal state. The main character, Ela (exquisitely played by Sreelekha Mitra), is a former TV actress whose recent loss of her daughter fractured her relationship with her husband, Shishir. She's trying to overcome her grief by starting a new life in a new house.

As her loan application gets rejected by the bank, she attempts to sell her father's property, an old neglected theatre. Yet, her depressed step-brother, Bubu, who is staying at the theatre, refuses, believing that her mother was responsible for the death of his own mom. Eventually, Ela finds herself compelled to accept her boss's offer in exchange for her dream house, believing that will bring back peace to her life. Unbeknownst to her, her life is about to turn upside down.

“Once Upon a Time in Calcutta is a powerful drama that deals with the deep emotions of its characters

“The city's landscape is at the core of Sengupta's film, where most of the characters live

One of the characters is Raja, a young man whose father works as a servant for Bubu and lives at the theatre. Ela takes Raja as a younger brother. She finds him a job at her boss' company, which turns out to be a chit fund company that allures poor people to put all their savings into a fake investment. After the exposure of the company's scheme, Raja was left behind to deal with the poor enraged investors.

The city's landscape is at the core of Sengupta's film, with the recurring comparison of the poor neighbourhoods where most of the characters live, and the modern side of the city where the construction work of a new bridge takes place. The changing city by the force of modernization plays like a visual metaphor reflecting the characters' metamorphosis, and their submission to the materiality of modern life.

Aditya Vikram Sengupta relies on imagery and pure aesthetics of cinema through brilliant visual motifs, exquisite production design, and exceptional cinematography from Gökhan Tiryaki who is a long cooperater with the renowned Turkish filmmaker Nuri Bilge Ceylan and has several prestigious titles in his career including the Palme d'Or winner *Winter Sleep* (2014), and the iconic film *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia* (2011).

Tiryaki gives the film an impressive cinematography style with beautifully lit sets integrating aesthetic elements with realistic ones, and slow, steady camera movement floating around characters at times, and approaching them at others unfolding characters' emotions and thoughts.

Once Upon a Time in Calcutta is a powerful drama that deals with the deep emotions of characters clinging to a simpler past against a rapidly changing world around them. They are in pursuit of love and happiness, struggling to make their lives a little easier, and lift the devastating impact of modernization off their shoulders.



Film Director Ely Dagher on The Sea Ahead The City Inside You

Nahed Nasr

Your first feature film, *The Sea Ahead*, had its world premiere at Cannes. How was it different from 2015 when you received the Palme d'Or for your animated short *Waves* '98?

It is definitely different, as in 2015 my short film was screened among nine shorts for other directors, and the audience was not especially there for my film. However, it is difficult to put how I feel about this experience into words. I did not know anyone, I made the film on my own and came from Lebanon on my own to Cannes. It was my first time in a festival, but I ended up with the Palme d'Or. It was a fantasy.

This time in 2021, however, I participated with my feature *The Sea Ahead* with the crew and production team. It was a full house screening. The audience was impressed and interacted positively, and some Arabs and Lebanese cried, including me. In this film, I talk about a specific situation in Lebanon that is still unresolved. Whenever I watch the movie or talk about it, I get the same emotional state that Jana, the main character in the movie, struggles against.

What do you think about the MENA premiere of your film at El Gouna Film Festival?

“Without the festival's support, we wouldn't have been able to shoot the film.

The film has a long-standing tie with El Gouna Film Festival. It was supported by GFF in its 3rd edition (development phase), and in its 4th edition 2020 (post-production phase), and now it is marking its comeback to the festival in its 5th edition, featuring its MENA premiere.

Without the festival's support, we wouldn't have been able to shoot the film. Throughout the production journey, the film relied on small, limited and intermittent budgets, as it was not the favorite project for a European producer because its subject matter does not represent the image that the Westerner expects from an Arab film.

For example, Jana does not suffer in her relationship with her parents from the traditional conflicts that are usually presented in Arab films. Therefore her quest was not linked to break-free from family constraints, as the Western producer prefers. But as a team, we were sticking to our vision without compromise. The team members include many Lebanese who share Jana's dilemma, including myself, the director and writer of the film. In this film, I am interested in a realistic approach to contemporary issues, not to talk about the past or war or big stories, but about the reality of our daily life, which does not involve a conflict of generations, but rather a collective feeling that we are in the same rickety boat.

Why did you move from the animation in your previous award-winning short film, to the live action?

My goal was not to specialize in animation, but I resorted to it because it is easier to make an animated movie on your own compared to a live action. I did not study cinema at university, but rather visual arts, and it did not satisfy

me, so I moved to animation because it is the closest to the cinema in which I was working besides studying. I have worked as a film editor and assistant director where I learned cinema from storyboard to editing. I made my animated short film because it was the right choice at the time, until I had the opportunity to make my first feature film, and I was ready for it. However, it is the story that defines the medium, not the other way around.

In your previous short film, the main character was a lonely, sad boy, lost in the middle of the scary city. The same idea with a different approach seems to be the essence of *The Sea Ahead*, why is the connection with the city such an obsession for you?

For several months I have been thinking about how this obsession came to me. I think it came naturally as I grew up in the suburbs of Beirut, which is five kilometers from the capital. In 2004, we lost our beautiful house with a garden near the sea, and moved to an apartment on the fifth floor in a building. I think this shift has been very difficult for me. Gradually, we became separated from the sea surrounded by houses, while the sea itself was drowning in pollution. You can no longer look up to its openness to the universe. The city has changed and is still changing; while this obsession lurks within me and emerges from my films. The sea is a mirror of Jana's feelings, and her feelings are a mirror of the city.

The sound design in the movie is distinctive, unusual and special. How was the sound design plan?

The sound design is based on the main concept of the film depicting the city from Jana's perspective. I worked on sound design with great passion, I had the luxury of time and was working on my own laptop at home, installing sound and working on music with my brother Joe. Our concern was to get close to and portray Jana's solitude through sound. When we were shooting the movie, Beirut was not as it is now, without movement, gasoline and electricity, but, as it used to be, bustling with movement and sounds. However, I was experimenting with the way Jana perceives the city, through sound design. The sound of the city is not necessarily the traditional perception of crowding sounds, but rather the sound that reaches you in particular according to your mood and vision. I shot the movie in my parents' apartment, and Jana's room was once my room, this is how I received the city. In art we are forced to reformulate the elements around us to convey our sense of reality and not reality as it is.

How do you expect the audience in Egypt and the Arab world to receive your film?

This will be the first time that I attend a screening of a film of mine in Egypt, as I did not attend *Waves* '98 screening in Cairo years ago. Some Egyptian friends commented when they watched *The Sea Ahead* that it is close to the world of *The Last Days of the City* by Tamer

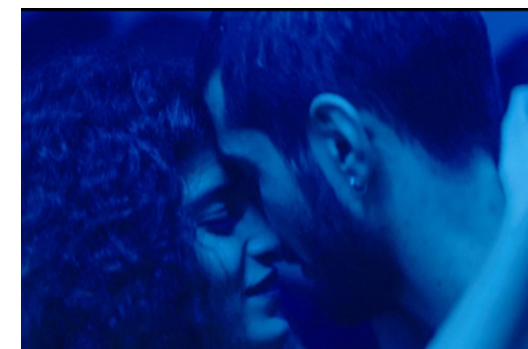


El-Said. I'm looking forward to interacting directly with the Egyptian audience at El Gouna Film Festival.

You and the city, will you revisit this theme in your next films?

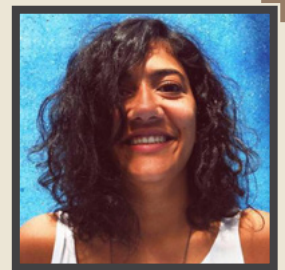
I have three new movie stories, but it's hard to shoot them in Beirut now because they would seem detached from their reality. It's hard to tell the story of Lebanon through a love story with blackouts, diesel and everything.

What I aspire to in my future films is to be in a sharp confrontation with the status quo to challenge the current Lebanese reality. I look forward to telling bigger stories. I will certainly not give up my cinematic language, and will not slip into political directness. Yet, there are certainly many stories that we need to deal with in Lebanon, through a greater confrontation and a greater challenge to the power mafia. If we don't address them, who will? However, my films will continue to address the topics in a way that everyone everywhere can relate to, not only in Lebanon, despite being Lebanese.



“The sound design is based on the main concept of the film depicting the city from Jana's perspective

5 Years Questions



Abeer Mohamed

Head of Guest Relations

- The 5 years went in a blur honestly, sometimes it feels like it was just yesterday when a common friend recommended me to jump on board in the first edition. When you are part of the inauguration of something, you can't help but feel like it's your baby and you can't wait to see it grow.
- The success story is the dedication of everyone and that nothing matters except that the job has to get done. To me the biggest challenge has always been how fast everything can change and we have to adapt, there's no such thing as "this was the plan" when it comes to such a large event with so many moving pieces.

- The secret of the GFF success is commitment and flexibility.
- The key to doing my job is confidentiality, we don't laugh and tell.

- I hope it continues to grow, build a wider audience base, expand beyond the nine-day run of the festival and become a staple on industry professionals' calendar.



Film director Darine Hotait on Tallahassee Tales of Diaspora and Trauma

Nahed Nasr

How do you see the world premiere of your film at El Gouna Film Festival?

I am very excited to have my film at the El Gouna Film Festival, which I am attending for the first time, for several reasons: This is my first trip since Covid-19; also I am very excited to be in Egypt, where I have lived in intermittent periods of my life and have so many memories. This is also the first time that I have attended a screening of one of my films in Egypt, and there is something very emotional about that. The third reason is that I respect El Gouna Film Festival a lot and see that it has achieved a lot of success in a short period of time. In just five years, the festival has made a huge impact on the film industry in the region and on attracting funding and support. El Gouna had a great impact and a great presence at a time when nothing of this magnitude was happening, and it took up a space that was needed. I am excited that my film premiere will be there and it will also be an opportunity to see my film on a big screen for the first time because it

was shown in several festivals without my presence. I am also happy to meet my fellow filmmakers whom I haven't met in a long time.

In what way Tallahassee is different from your previous films about diaspora?

I made some films before about diaspora because this is my experience, and in *Tallahassee* I wanted to stay true to my experience as a storyteller and as a filmmaker. With *Tallahassee* I wanted to get more into the family dynamics. What makes a family a family and what makes it a safe space, and when does this safe space be jeopardised with expectations and lies? Whether you are living in the diaspora or back home in the region we experience those dynamics with our families. They always hide things, but these are the people that we trust the most. We are being judged by them, and there are certain expectations for us to fit certain standards of social structure. There is something about the diaspora feeling when you are totally in a new place but at the same time you are attached to a few details of your culture that you like to hold on to them so strongly. This is something injected into you through your family. The food, the music, the dance, the gathering, these are the little cultural things that make you warm towards your culture.

There is such an intergenerational experience in Tallahassee. Why did you gather all of these characters who belong to different generations in one place?

In this film there is a kind of intergenerational trauma. The film deals with mental health and how the trauma is transmitted from one generation to the next. But with this transmutation it gets diluted with time. The grandmother

has the traumatic experience of displacement that made her this complex bundle of emotions, when she tells her story the people around her can relate to certain things not everything. The mother, she has her own experience as well, she has been grown here and has her culture owned through her mom. When it gets to Mira, we see how the conflict of the generations manifested in her own confusion. Then we see the little boy, who is the next generation who observes all of this and for him it is clear "just be you, dream, be yourself" this is his interpretation of all these which came before him. He has his own interpretation of the traumatic experiences. I wish the audience who watch this film can relate to the experience of this family whether they are in diaspora or in their homeland.

Aren't you worried that the English language would be a barrier for Arab audiences to receive a film about an Arab family in the diaspora?

The use of language in the film was authentic. For example, I speak both Arabic and English and this is what happens with everyone I know in the diaspora community. Some of the younger generations who can't find a way to interact in Arabic can't speak Arabic. If I want to present a film about the diaspora, the language in the film must be similar to the language of the people in the diaspora. There was a need to combine Arabic and English. That is how we live.

Was the Western audience in your mind, and what do you expect it to convey about the Arab community in the diaspora through your film?

The white man is my last concern. I don't feel the need to comfort them. We have reached a stage where they have to understand our culture and our experience. In all my films I don't care about making things up to gain an audience at the expense of the authenticity of the story. It is not important to understand the details of the culture that he does not know, but it is important to get him the big picture. I wanted the audience to be immersed in the experience and to carry with them when they get out of it what they want. This is my cinematic approach.

What are the most challenging aspects you face as an Arab filmmaker in the diaspora?

There are many Arabs here who are working hard to try to change the Arab narrative in Hollywood, and there are many efforts to raise awareness of this and to gain supporters to develop the Western mind to understand and comprehend the approach of authenticity in our stories and to return to us as a reference and to stop misrepresenting us in their cinema. We are all working on this. What really unites us is not making our own films, but rather trying to change the image of the Arab in their films. During the next five years, I think that there will be many changes that will happen in terms of Arab representation in American cinema. Signs of that are already beginning to appear.

Regardless of how much anyone likes this or that work, the Arab presence on the map itself is very important. It can be built upon for the future.

Did you consider making films in the Arab region?

I am present in the Arab world through Cinephilia, the production company I founded ten years ago, which supports male and female filmmakers in the Arab world. It is a very important connection to me in the region. I think I am present in the region not as a filmmaker, but through creating opportunities for filmmakers. Of course I would love to be there, but I don't think I would want to take a place that isn't mine. In ten years, Cinephilia has created a space for Arab filmmakers to feel that they can work with authenticity and tell their story the way they want without having to please Western audiences or being unfaithful to their true identity in order to be accepted.

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I am present in the Arab world through Cinephilia, creating opportunities for filmmakers.



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During the next five years, many changes will happen in terms of Arab representation in American cinema

5 Years Questions



Mostafa Abdel Aty
GFF's Photographer

- The festival has been able to cement its name as a major film platform in only 5 years, which highlights the high-end status it has earned in the region.
- Everyone has a role to play, and I love what I do, which makes me work so hard to get the best results.
- The secret is the passion of the festival team who save no effort to make their dreams come true at a steady pace. The festival's administration has selectively picked very talented staff members who are pretty dedicated to the festival and what they do.
- When I first met Mr. Intishal, his beautiful personality. personality made me very excited to join the team. The most beautiful moment was when my first photo was published in a newspaper and Mr. Intishal was keen on personally expressing his appreciation of my work.
- I see that the festival has become already one of the most important film hubs in Egypt and I expect it will soon land as the most important on the international scene. I hope this happens soon and I personally contribute to this success in the near future.

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The film, which is co-written by Brizé and Olivier Gorce, premiered at Venice Film Festival



‘Another World’ Film Review The Cruelty of the Materialistic World

Since the early dawn of cinema, international capitalism has been one of the most criticized subjects worldwide. One of the iconic films that criticized capitalism on the silver screen was Charlie Chaplen’s *Modern Times*. In modern day cinema, many filmmakers tackled the 2008 Great Recession that caused the lay off of many employees, who lost their jobs permanently. Stéphane Brizé’s *Another World* is one of these films that highlights the suffering of a person with capitalist extreme procedures that doesn’t take the human factor into consideration.

The film, which is co-written by Brizé and Olivier Gorce, premiered at Venice and will be competing at El Gouna Film Festival’s Feature Narrative Competition.



Hani Mustafa

Another World starts with a camera pan to show a few pictures capturing precious family moments of Philippe Lemesle (Vincent Lindon) with his family to reflect the bond that ties him to his family. However, in the next scene, Philippe is in a meeting with his lawyer, his wife, together with her lawyer during negotiations for divorce; discussing how much he should pay his wife for the time she served as his wife and a mother for his children.

The filmmaker depicts the daily routine of Lemesle who works as an executive manager in a factory in France, which is a part of a multinational enterprise. In the first

few scenes, he is seen donning his suit, when he drives his car to go to work, yet the important scene was when he is jogging on the treadmill in the gym, he seems determined as if he is struggling against all the odds that will come later in the story.

The plot unfolds gradually and shows how pillars of Lemesle’s social life are at risk of collapsing one by one. Firstly, his marriage; then an unjustifiable fight between Lemesle’s son and a teacher reveals that his son has a rare mental condition. Therefore, his son should stay in a special clinic for mental health care for several days.

The incidents develop when the American head of the multinational enterprise that owns branches in Europe orders the downsizing of a number of its branches including the factory where Lemesle directs. The film explains the pressure that the protagonist suffers from when he refuses to be involved in laying off his employees and when he has to face the consequences of his failure to convince the American businessman with his humane solutions, which eventually leads to his own layoff.

The film also showcases a development in the divorce situation when Anne bursts into tears telling her husband that she felt insulted when the lawyers were discussing the divorce regulations as she was a commodity. For her, the whole

process was awfully materialistic. Following this, the newly-discovered mental condition of their son perhaps made the couple stand for each other to get through this ordeal.

The romantic end of the film gives the audience hope that some beautiful meanings of life, like family and love, should prevail at the end against the incoherent speeches of the materialistic international market rules.



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The romantic end of the film gives the audience hope that some beautiful meanings should prevail at the end



