

ELGOUNA   
FILM FESTIVAL  
1ST EDITION  
مهرجان الجونة السينمائي

# EL GOUNA STAR



THE THIRD MURDER  
RANDOM CONFESSIONS



**Press Office Manager**

Khaled Mahmoud

**Bulletin Chief Editor**

Hani Mustafa

**Reporters & writers**

Najet Belhatem

Nahed Nasr

Yasmine Zohdi

Mohamed Fahmi

Mohamed El-Hajj

Sherif Abdel-Hadi

**Design & Layout**

Ahmed Atef Megahed

Ahmed Nagdy Abou

Zeid

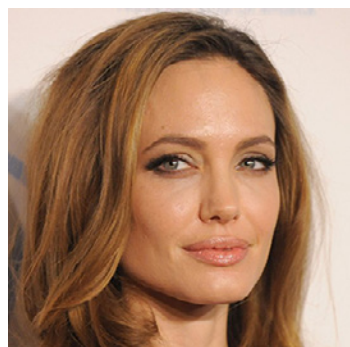
El Haythem Said

Younes

	Marina Theater	Audimax (TU Berlin)	Sea Cinema 1	Sea Cinema 2	Sea Cinema 3
11 AM				11:00 AM <b>The Putin Interviews: Episodes 3 and 4</b> 116 min	
12 PM					
1 PM					
2 PM					
3 PM		3:00 PM <b>The Other Side of Hope</b> 98 min	3:00 PM <b>EL Haimoune</b> 95 min	3:15 PM <b>In Praise of Nothing</b> 78 min	
4 PM					3:45 PM <b>I Have a Picture...</b> 75 min
5 PM					
6 PM			5:30 PM <b>Rue de la Victoire</b> 65 min - R: 16+ Attended by dir. Ferderique Cournoyer Lessard	6:00 PM <b>Brimstone &amp; Glory</b> 67 min   Attended by dir. Viktor Jakovleski & Prod. Kellen Quinn	
7 PM	6:40 PM <b>The Florida Project</b> 115 min R: 18+	6:30 PM <b>Dabka</b> 117 mi			6:30 PM <b>An Inconvenient Sequel...</b> 98 min
8 PM			8:00 PM <b>Mrs Fang</b> 86 min		
9 PM	9:30 PM <b>The Third Murder</b> 124 min	9:30 PM <b>Corporate</b> 95 min Attended by dir. Nicolas silhol		8:45 PM <b>Son of Sofia</b> 111 min	
10 PM					9:30 PM <b>Shorts Program 2</b> 79 min R: 18+
11 PM					
12 AM					



- OPENING & CLOSING FILMS
- FEATURE NARRATIVE COMPETITION
- FEATURE DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION
- SHORT FILMS COMPETITION
- OFFICIAL SELECTION OUT OF COMPETITION
- SPECIAL PRESENTATION



**FIRST THEY KILLED MY FATHER: A DAUGHTER OF CAMBODIA REMEMBERS**

Directed by Angelina Jolie  
Will be screened on Wednesday  
September 27, 6:45  
at Marina Theatre

**MASTERCLASSES**

CREATIVE COLLABORATION: DEVELOPING A UNIQUE VISION & LANGUAGE

Masterclass by Osama Fawzi and Mahmoud Hemeida

Tuesday, 26th of September, 10:30am

**PANEL DISCUSSIONS**

Production Stories: Arab Producers in Conversation

Tuesday, 26th of September, 12:30pm

# THE THIRD MURDER

## RANDOM CONFESSIONS



Acclaimed for his award-winning family dramas, Hirokazu Koreeda's most recent «The Third Murder» offers a fresh take on the court room drama genre in a clear departure from his usual stories and recurrent themes.

Within the familiar setting of the popular genre Koreeda carefully designs his story starting right off with a murder, for us to grasp what's happening in the following scenes. An ex-convict, who was released not so long ago from prison after spending 30 years for a double murder, killed his employer -a cans labeling factory owner- and burned his body after stealing his wallet and confessed to committing the crime. A simple story but when lawyer Shigemori looks into it he finds several holes in the straight narrative.

Misumi -the man who confessed to the crime- provides a perfect profile for a killer with his 30 years in prison, yet his testimony seems kind of arbitrary when examined, as a result what seemed to be an open-and-shut case gets more and more complicated with all sort of facts resurfacing one by one, a secret understanding between the killer and the deceased wife, abuse claims, and other elements come to the lawyer attention. Upon understanding the complexity of the case, Shigemori tries to play the whole thing differently in order to save his client from the sure death penalty.

But it's not an average court room drama, the biggest obstacle Shigemori has to face isn't the legal system, or the modern institutions, not even a great villain. It's his defendant himself is his biggest opponent. Misumi is vague and his motives are unclear which provides for one of the most innovative forces of antagonism in the genre.

«The Third Murder» is a court room drama that's not interested in giving an exact and final answer to the «case». Instead of being another average who-dunnit flick, The Third Murder addresses more serious questions about the relation between institutional justice process and truth.

Though it feels didactic at times, Koreeda manages to lead us through his philosophical concerns without really giving any answers. The Third Murder seems more concerned with presenting us to certain mysteries of existence rather than explaining this, no happy endings, nor cynical ones either. As its release coincides with a huge public debate in

Japan around the abolishment of death penalty, the film doesn't burden itself with the responsibility to provide a dramatic argument for either of the debate's sides.

The film was critically applauded for Koreeda's sure handed direction and the great cinematography by Takimoto Mikiya in his third collaboration with Koreeda as a cinematographer.

The Third Murder was nominated for the golden lion in Venice International Film Festival 2017.

Mohamed EL-Hajj



# IN PRAISE OF NOTHING DESCRIBING THE ZERO



A daring work that defies classification is playing along with its titular subject; nothing. Is it possible that director Boris Mitic in his quest to defend this big black hole in our human knowledge has given it a face, and a voice?!

Shot in 70 countries by 62 cinematographers, «In Praise of Nothing» playfully opens in its very same issue «a whistleblowing documentary parody (not exactly in prose) wherein Nothing tries to defend its cause» as it reads in the first title card in a technique that Mitic uses all over the film in a manner very similar to its usage in silent films.

The three main pillars of the film are the story of nothing's life events as told by the title cards, and nothings voice reciting his defense in childlike verse lines which bears his comment, his own narration of these life events, and the images that sometimes offer a subjective companion to the text and sometimes offer an interpretation.

The film is very faithful to its description, though the choice of Rockstar and godfather of punk rock Iggy Pop voice to be the voice of nothing reciting a defense for his own existence might seem contradictory with Iggy's character and public persona but it serves Mitic's total statement.

Mitic's nothing doesn't feel like nothing but rather a modern day prophet and a mystical power. Much like Wim Wenders film «Wings of Desire» angel of death Daniel, Mitic's nothing cares about and is very much fond of humans, he feels for them, but he can't really help them, instead he became like a human himself, at time he really is one!

Mitic followed a very creative process for the imagery that represents this notion of nothing. In a memo sent to the cinematographers Mitic states the direction of the submissions he aims for as «Documentary shots where you can explain explicitly where Nothing is in the picture, or documentary shots where you can't rationalize the Nothing in the picture, but simply feel that it's there, or footage filmed from the point of view of Nothing, i.e. whatever & however you think Nothing would choose to observe in our world». On a brainstorming platform specific to the project, contributing cinematographers got the chance to comment anonymously on the footage only for Mitic to figure out how to construct this relation between the text and the visual.

But in essence it's a game, Mitic is leaving the greater task of recognizing the relation between nothing defense and the flow of images it poses on the viewer to interpret away from didacticism.

«In Praise of Nothing» is a very challenging piece of art that sits on the brink between giving a strong comment on the world as we live it today, and a sly tongue in cheek humor that amuses as much as it disturbs.

Mohamed El-Hajj



# IRAQI FILMMAKER MAJD HAMID: “IT’S TIME FOR IRAQIS TO TELL THEIR OWN STORY”

Majd Hamid studied film in the University of Baghdad before graduating in 2004 to work as a director and editor on TV documentary films in several Arab countries. Years later he returned to Baghdad to reintegrate into the film scene, hopeful that things will change for the better. Along with other young filmmakers, Hamid decided to pave his own way and make his own films, because he views it as the only way the Iraqi people can tell their story from their own perspective. Hamid's debut film, Baghdad Photographer, is part of El Gouna Film Festival's Short Films Competition lineup.

## You made your first film 14 years after graduating from film school. Why did it take so long?

After I graduated I worked for a while as a director and editor on television documentaries, and I also acted in film and TV for a while, which is probably why it took me a while to make this film, especially with the war happening. The state had allocated all its resources to military purposes, and there were no film, TV or theatre productions. This was a turning point for me and for many other young filmmakers, working to build upon the efforts of others who came before us and tried to make films independently, relying mostly on each other's support. Some of us sell personal belongings to make films, and some of us resort to film festivals that can help us with exposure.

## What is the Iraqi film industry currently like?

Filmmaking requires basic foundations that we currently do not have in Iraq, and unfortunately they cannot be provided without the state. For example, the state has not made any efforts to renovate movie theatres that were burned or destroyed during the war, now only used as storage spaces. There are no film theatres in Iraq but for a few in shopping malls, and they only show international or Arab productions because we do not have any films coming out of Iraq right now. What we are attempting to do is to keep the art of cinema alive in Iraq, because this is the only hope we have of telling our own stories rather than have others telling them for us. On the other hand, however, technological advancements in filmmaking have made it easier to make films, in terms of filming and editing at least, and there are some independent platforms that contribute to film production, such as the Iraqi Independent Film Center.

## Where can Iraqi audiences watch your films?

Iraqi people cannot watch Iraqi films except through a few festivals independently organized by film lovers and art supporters in Iraq, or in public

screenings in cafés and such on special occasions. There are currently no venues to consistently screen independent Iraqi films.

## Why did you choose the idea in Baghdad Photographer to be at the heart of your debut film?

The story of the film has haunted me for many years now. We were born during a time of war, and every time my father was called to battle he would take us to a photographer's studio to have one last picture taken in case he didn't come back. It's true that my father returned, thankfully, but I could never let go of this idea. A family that goes to take its picture taken not to celebrate a moment of togetherness but to challenge death with a final image. For me, this story, with its bitterness and bravery, summarizes the nature of life in Iraq. Today, many young Iraqis take pictures of themselves and ask people close to them to use them in announcements of their death in case they don't make it. It is as though death is the one inevitable truth in Iraq right now.

## The film condenses 35 years of war in two minutes and 17 seconds without one gunshot or drop of blood as you previously told me. How did you manage to accomplish this?

I believe a good editor can make a good director, and although it took me a long time to make my first film, my work in film editing has had a huge effect on my vision, enabling me to convey a lot within a few scenes. Also, in a film about death detail has no meaning, and this idea plays a part in the film as well.

## How did you manage to produce the film?

It happened by pure coincidence. It was made through a personal donation from a friend of mine and my father's, Dr. Munadel Dawood, a theatre director. When I told him the idea of the film he decided to fund it himself. It cost about 2000 USD, mostly spent on production design and other odds and ends. The cast and crew did not get paid. This is how we mostly do films in Iraq right now.

## What does it mean to you to be participating in GFF with Baghdad Photographer?

Taking part in a festival in Egypt, the hub of filmmaking in the Arab world, is a huge opportunity. Interacting with the Egyptian audience and with Egyptian critics means a lot to me, especially as this is the festival's first edition. It makes me proud to be involved with this special and clearly distinguished festival as it takes its first steps.

Nahed Nassr

