

PRESS KIT

CINEMAXIMILIAAN SHORT FILMS

We are happy to present you seven short films made at the Cinemaximiliaan project house. These films were realised by Marof Hakimi (Afghanistan), Rand Abou Fakher (Syria), Anastasia Zolkina (Russia), Louay Daboos (Syria), Omar Al Samarrai (Iraq), Angela Al Souliman (Syria) and Fatma Osman (Somalia).

In december 2017 the first Cinemaximiliaan short film was made by Marof Hakimi and his family, assisted by directors Rokhsareh Ghaemmaghami and Julie De Clercq.

In April 2018 film director Béla Tarr accompanied Rand Abou Fakher in the process of making a short film and gave a workshop which resulted in four additional short films by Anastasia Zolkina, Louay Daboos, Omar Al Samarrai, Angela Al Souliman.

In July 2018 Fatma Osman made her short film with assistance of film director Hans Van Nuffel.





ABOUT CINEMAXIMILIAAN

Cinemaximiliaan brings films and debates to asylum centres, private homes and cinemas all over Belgium, bridging newcomers with locals in a personal way. The starting point of the film project is each participant's desire to share his or her story through a short film. Films are made in and around the Cinemaximiliaan project house in Brussels. It becomes a place where people gather, work, sleep over, make movies together and much more. Founders and coordinators Gawan Fagard and Gwendolyn Lootens are living in the house and sharing space and time to build bridges between people. The house figures as a character in the films, and transforms itself into a film set.





HOW DID CINEMAXIMILIAAN START?

Cinemaximiliaan started three years ago with a simple beamer and a screen under a tent in the Maximiliaan park in Brussels, where newcomers were arriving after a long journey. Over time, it became a family of local people and newcomers working together on many projects. We go to asylum centres where we meet other people who want to work along with us. In those centers, we bring filmscreenings, and we talk with people and take them out of their remoteness. We invite people for film screenings in our house, in other people's homes, in cinemas and cultural venues. Screenings are accompanied by debates, gatherings, shared food, and people also sleep over and enjoy a small vacation. In that way Cinemaximiliaan has been building up a vast network of volunteers involving hundreds – if not thousands of people from many different backgrounds.

HOW DO YOU WORK WITH EACH OTHER IN CINEMAXIMILIAAN?

Every single person we met we know by name and what they like to do, which experience they have and what they aspire. We're not only working with people with an artistic background, but also with bakers, barbers, ex-soldiers, ngo workers, academics, truckdrivers, students,... It's so important to treat every person in an individual way and to see him or her as a person and not as a part of a group. People have lost themselves on the way and have to find themselves again in a new country, in a new challenge, in a new life. Meanwhile, many newcomers are working on many departments in Cinemaximiliaan: production, communication, event management, programming, catering, and many more things. These shared responsibilities help people to find themselves again.

HOW DID YOU START TO MAKE FILMS IN CINEMAXIMILIAAN?

Around the many film screenings we organise, a lot of newcomers we met have asked us to make a movie themselves. We have been thinking for a long time how to deal with this question, as we are aware of the responsibilities once you take a camera in your hands and show its images to the world. Together we decided that we wanted to build up an independent film production platform where many people will have the occasion to make a short film over the coming years. That's when we decided to move to a large house in Brussels, now known as the Cinemaximiliaan project house. All films are completely free, there are no limits, the only limitation being the space: all films will transform from the very same, intimate and domestic space into a filmset. We believe in giving that space and time to each person who has a need to make a movie, meanwhile preserving a certain intimacy which is proper to the house. From there, we can see what each individual needs to be able to make the film they really want to make. In this situation of intimacy and trust we attempt to keep the focus to develop really strong films.





WHAT IS THE CINEMAXIMILIAAN PROJECT HOUSE?

It is a rear house in the canal area in Brussels, where we find base to create a large family all together. We moved to a house in Molenbeek on april 2017 to be able to host more people around events we organise and to make films within the intimate situation of a house. The house constantly changes, from a rehearsal space, to dinners, meetings, a film set, and back to a house where coordinators Gawan and Gwendolyn are living and sharing time with others. The door is open and it's always warmly welcoming newcomers and locals alike. The house is the beating heart for our activities, where people sleep over, and stay for dinner before and after events we organise or during productions.

HOW DO YOU MAKE THE FILMS?

Since the very beginning, Cinemaximiliaan has been closely supported by many professionals in the film world and the audiovisual arts. Around each film we build a strong team that combines both high-level professionals and newcomers, who have or don't have experience in filmmaking. Usually we invite a director to mentor one of the aspiring filmmakers of Cinemaximiliaan. Besides the production, we train people in sound recording, camera and light assistance, editing, acting, etc... and build on the development of new talents. We all learn from each other. We involve everybody everywhere. We take in consideration everyone's individual talents and aspirations. Everybody joins in the production on a completely voluntary basis, to abolish all hierarchy in the way we work.

WHAT ABOUT THE FINANCING OF THE FILMS?

Production wise the films are made at a no-budget basis, meaning that we only have minimal funds available to pay for catering, for transport and for production costs. People and organisations share their time, their energy and put materials and equipment at our disposal, since they believe in the unique character of the project and the urgency of the films.





WHICH FILMS ARE MADE UNTIL NOW AT CINEMAXIMILIAAN?

In the winter 2017-2018 we've have made our first short film with the Afghan family Hakimi, directed by Marof Hakimi who was assisted by the award-winning Iranian director Rokhsareh Ghaemmaghami (Sonita) and Belgian director Julie Declercq. In spring 2018 young talent Rand Abou Fakher made her film. On that occasion we invited the Hungarian film legend Béla Tarr (Satantango, Werckmeister Harmonies) to hold a one-week workshop at Cinemaximiliaan and assist Rand in her film. Ten aspiring filmmakers participated in the workshop and besides Rand's 30-minute film 'Braided Love', four people made a short exercise under mentorship of Béla Tarr. Angela Al Souliman, Omar Al-Samarrai, Anastasia Zolkina and Louay Dabous directed a short film and helped each other on the set. In the summer of 2018 we shot a new film written, directed and acted by two young woman from Somalia, Fatma Osman and Muna Hassan, assisted by the Belgian filmmaker Hans Van Nuffel (Adem). This film is now in post-production and will be released in the fall 2018. Meanwhile there are many more people writing down ideas, developing their scenario, and getting ready to make their film. On the other hand, there are many professional filmmakers willing to get involved in some way in the future.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE UNIQUE FILMMAKING PROCESS?

This is not a film school. It is not an institute. It is a house and a big family. People from all parts of the world, and with all levels of experience are helping each other to create each others projects. We build bridges together, bridges that are treated with a lot of care and that are easy to collapse, but in their vulnerability, even if it's a string, there is a connection. This project is simple and humble and always individual. We make time for big events and projects with lots of people, and then we meet for breakfast the day after to talk with each and every individual about what is going on in their lives. Unfortunately, many people have the feeling that their voice is not heard. Many times a day this question is discussed in another way with Iraqis, Afghanis, Syrians, Somalis, Palestinians, but also with people from Canada, France, Belgium, Japan, Poland, Germany, Greece, Colombia,... This project is like a magnet, all people are coming to encounter, to be part of it, to work together, and to clash with each other. We're learning everyday. With small things we can do a lot, and we prefer to keep it simple and overseeable. But simple is the hardest thing to reach.

July 2018

Gwendolyn Lootens, film director and visual artist

Gawan Fagard, film theorist and programmer

Coordinators & founders of Cinemaximiliaan





SCREAMING IN SILENCE

2018

MAROF HAKIMI

Original title: Roepen in stilte
English title: Screaming in Silence
Genre: Drama
Duration: 11 min
Year of Production: 2018
Country: Belgium
Screening Format: DCP
Color: Color
Language: Farsi
Subtitles: English

Director: Marof Hakimi
Assisted by: Julie De Clerq,
Rokhsareh Ghaemmaghani
Screenplay: Sheri, Fataneh,
Farzana, Vakil & Makya Hakimi
Cast: Sheri, Fataneh, Farzana, Vakil &
Makya Hakimi, Leila Kameghar, Abdullah Fakhri,
Lubnan Al-Wazny, Saden Abd Aljbaar, Mehrdad
Arefani (voice)
Camera: Victoire Bonin, Mojtaba Bahadori
Sound: Ayham Seif, Nik Ahn, Hjalte
Zacharewicz, Omar Al Samarrai
Editing: Charles Godin
Art Department: Tariq Al Naeeme, Omar Al
Samarrai, Thierry Van Capellen, Vero Bakos,
Natalia Trevino
Sound Mixing: Alejandro Rivas-Cottle
Colorgrading: Caroline Nugues Bourchat
Subtitles: Batul Hossini, Bilal Issa
Producers: Gwendolyn Lootens, Gawan Fagard
Line Producer: Kinshuk Surjan
Production: Cinemaximiliaan
Post Production Support: Gsara, Gaphoui
In collaboration with: Kunstenfestivaldesarts
Production team: Ebrahim Neissi, Lubnan Al-Wazny,
Oscar Van Der Put, Leonie Rottmann, Aaron Stevens,
Solange Luyckx, Alexander MacAdam, Toon Mertens

SHORT SYNOPSIS

This film recounts some fragments of stories from the life of an Afghan family in Iran and the hardships they undergo which ultimately force them to flee to Europe.

LONG SYNOPSIS

This film recounts some fragments of stories from the life of an Afghan family in Iran and the hardships they undergo which ultimately force them to flee to Europe. In Iran, discrimination of Afghans is present in all aspects of life, and even in death. The film is written, directed and acted by the family Hakimi, with assistance of director Rokhsareh Ghaemmaghani (Sonita). It is a call for all people who have no land to go back to and who are in search for a new homeland.

BIOGRAPHY OF DIRECTOR

Marof Hakimi (Afghanistan, 1979). He was born in Afghanistan but moved with his parents to Iran at a young age. He lived 20 years with his family in Iran but life was very hard as Afghans. They decided to flee to Belgium in 2016. Now, he is living with his family in Belgium and preparing to apply for film school.

FILMOGRAPHY OF DIRECTOR

First Film



BRAIDED LOVE 2018

RAND ABOU FAKHER

Original title: Gevlochten liefde

English title: Braided Love

Genre: Drama

Duration: 24 min

Year of Production: 2018

Country: Belgium

Screening Format: DCP

Color: B/W

Language: Dutch

Subtitles: English

Director: Rand Abou Fakher

Screenplay: Rand Abou Fakher

Cast: Anna Franziska Jaeger, Dahlia Pessemiers

Assistant Director: Jeronimo Sarmiento

Mentor: Béla Tarr

DOP: Hans Bruch Jr.

Camera Assistant: Sean Luke

Sound: Bahzad Salhe, Mahmood Zourob

Sound Training: Gert Verboven, Matthias van Ruijssevelt, Matthais Van Gasse, Enzo Tibi

Editing: Charles Godin

Acting Consultant: Lisaboa Houbrechts

Scenario Assistance: Masha Berkers, Hans Van Nuffel, Alex Verhaest

Script Supervisor: Angela Al Souliman

MUA: Anastasia Zolkina

Set Design: Bas Bonhof, Mousab al Shaikh, Rand Abou Fakher

Art Department: Tariq Al Naeeme, Omar Al-Samarrai, Thierry Van Capellen, Vero Bakos, Natalia Trevino

Producers: Gwendolyn Lootens, Gawan Fagard

Line Producer: Kinshuk Surjan

Production: Cinemaximiliaan

Sound Mixing: Alejandro Rivas-Cottle

Colorgrading: Caroline Nugues Bourchat

Subtitles: Batul Hossini, Bilal Issa

Post Production Support: Gsara, Graphoui

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Sections of one day showing the complications of a relationship when it's built on a pain that has never been confronted.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Sections of one day showing the complications of a relationship between a mother and her daughter. It explores the fine lines of an intense relationship built on a pain that has never been confronted.

BIOGRAPHY OF DIRECTOR

Rand Abou Fakher (Syria, 1995). She studied music at the conservatory in Damascus and also sound engineering and optics, before she came to Belgium in 2015. She's interested in many artistic expressions and is now applying for film school.

FILMOGRAPHY OF DIRECTOR

First Film

In collaboration with:

Kunstenfestivaldesarts

Production Team:

Omar Al-Samarai, Lubnan Al-Wazny, Soetkin Keukeleire, Alain Dupuy, Nour Assamadani, Abdulahman Al Jasseem, Asad Diriye.

Thanks to:

Sarah Hemdi, Maria Pia Bassil, Martha Vandermeulen, Pauwel Hertmans, Romy Lauwers, Grace Ellen Barkey, Victor Ghostin, Solange Luyckx, Flo Vandenbussche, Mojtaba Bahadori, Fatma Osman, Aza Declercq, Olga Paterlini, Vincent Metzinger, Stijn Verhoeven, Needcompany, Decorateliër Jozef Wouters.



TRANSIT 2018

ANASTASIA ZOLKINA

Original title: Transit

English title: Transit

Genre: Drama

Duration: 6 min

Year of Production: 2018

Country: Belgium

Screening Format: DCP

Color: Color

Language: English

Subtitles: Dutch/French

Director: Anastasia Zolkina

Cast: Anastasia Zolkina

Camera: Kevin Kola, Gohram Baloch

Editing: Anastasia Zolkina

Editing Assistance: Diren Agbaba,
Kinshuk Surjan

Sound Mixing: Jean-Noël Boissé

Producers: Gawan Fagard

Gwendolyn Lootens

Production: Cinemaximiliaan

In collaboration with:

Kunstenfestivaldesarts

Post Production Support:

Gsara, Graphoui

Made in a workshop with
Béla Tarr at Cinemaximiliaan.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

The story is about an endless journey. A chapter from the life of a traveler who has to leave the past life behind once again and make a new step in the future with no regrets. One part of the journey ends and another one begins at the central train station in Antwerp. It is the border line crossing which is a harder choice to make than it seems to be.

LONG SYNOPSIS

At the beginning the traveler starts a new part of her journey at the train station in Antwerp. She receives a call from somebody who she knew in the past. The person on the phone tries to convince her to come back but she already made her decision. After the call she walks around the station and chooses a place to go by looking at the timetable. She waits at the platform starts to sort out her backpack. It contains many objects from around the world. Everything she will not use in the new life she will start, she throws away. This way she tries to leave behind the past and its memories. She had many different lives but her journey always continued. Now she leaves the station to face the future.

BIOGRAPHY OF DIRECTOR

Anastasia Zolkina (Russia, 1995). She's a photographer and traveler. The world of cinema has always been an important part of her life and work, working backstage. She dreamt about becoming a director in the high school, but there was no possibility to make it a profession.

FILMOGRAPHY OF DIRECTOR

First Film



AFTER LIFE 2018

LOUAY DABOUS

Original title: After Life

English title: After Life

Genre: Drama

Duration: 18 min

Year of Production: 2018

Country: Belgium

Screening Format: DCP

Color: Color

Language: none

Subtitles: none

Director: Louay Dabous

With: Bilan Gumus

Camera: Louay Dabous

Editing : Louay Dabous

Music: Johann Sebastian Bach

Post Production: Kinshuk Surjan

Sound Mixing: Maxime Thomas

Producers: Gawan Fagard,

Gwendolyn Lootens

Production: Cinemaximiliaan

In collaboration with:

Kunstenfestivaldesarts

Post Production Support:

Gsara, Graphoui

Made in a workshop with
Béla Tarr at Cinemaximiliaan.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

A normal day in the life of a young man in a random city.

LONG SYNOPSIS

A day in the life of a young man in his small place in a random city. His life is divided between domestic ritual and his connection with other people.

BIOGRAPHY OF DIRECTOR

Louay Dabous (Syria, 1994). He worked in the Media Department of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. Now he studies third year film directing in RITCS School of Arts in Brussels.

FILMOGRAPHY OF DIRECTOR

New House (2017)



LETTER FROM BRUSSELS 2018

OMAR AL-SAMARRAI

Original title: Letter from Brussels

English title: Letter from Brussels

Genre: Drama

Duration: 18 min

Year of Production: 2018

Country: Belgium

Screening Format: DCP

Color: Color

Language: Arabic

Subtitles: French/English

Director: Omar Al-Samarrai

Director Assistant: Angela Al Souliman

Camera: Hans Bruch Jr.

Sound: Mahmoud Zourob

Editing : Roberto Ayllon

Colorgrading: Hans Bruch Jr.

Sound Mixing: Jean-Noël Boissé

Translation & Subtitles: Bilal Issa

Producers: Gawan Fagard

Gwendolyn Lootens

Production: Cinemaximiliaan

In collaboration with:

Kunstenfestivaldesarts

Post Production Support:

Gsara, Graphoui

Thanks to:

Lubnan Al-Wazny, Soetkin Keukeleire, Alain

Dupuy, Nour Assamadani

Made in a workshop with

Béla Tarr at Cinemaximiliaan.

SYNOPSIS

A love letter of the director to his children in Iraq, while preparing their favourite meal.

BIOGRAPHY OF DIRECTOR

Omar Al-Samarrai (Iraq, 1988). He worked in Iraq as a security agent. In 2015 he came to Belgium and started to develop an interest in photography and film.

FILMOGRAPHY OF DIRECTOR

First film



CHEERS! 2018

ANGELA AL SOULIMAN

Original title: Cheers!

English title: Cheers!

Genre: Drama

Duration: 9 min

Year of Production: 2018

Country: Belgium

Screening Format: DCP

Color: B/W

Language: English

Subtitles: Dutch/French

Director: Angela Al Souliman

Cast: Angela Al Souliman

Joachim Michaux

Camera: Hans Bruch Jr.

Camera Assistant: Sean Luke

Sound: Mahmoud Zourob

Editing : Kinshuk Surjan

Colorgrading: Hans Bruch Jr.

Sound Mixing: Jean-Noël Boissé

Translation & Subtitles:

Saraa Saleh, Bilal Issa

Producers: Gawan Fagard

Gwendolyn Lootens

Production: Cinemaximiliaan

In collaboration with:

Kunstenfestivaldesarts

Post Production Support:

Gsara, Graphoui

Thanks to:

Omar Al-Samarrai, Lubnan Al-Wazny,

Soetkin Keukeleire, Alain Dupuy,

Nour Assamadani

Made in a workshop with
Béla Tarr at Cinemaximiliaan.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

This short film highlights the difficulties of communication between two people from different cultures and with different memories. The love between a Syrian girl and a European guy isn't strong enough to transcend the differences between them.

LONG SYNOPSIS

This short film highlights the difficulties of communication between two people from different cultures and with different memories. What starts out as a simple conversation about wine, turns out to be a fundamental breaking point in a relationship. The love between a Syrian girl and a European guy isn't strong enough to transcend the differences between them and escalates in a romantic and philosophical drama.

BIOGRAPHY OF DIRECTOR

Angela Al Souliman (Syria, 1987). She holds an economy certification from Aleppo University in 2009. After graduation she worked in media as a reporter and a TV presenter in many Arabic channels. In 2014 she came to Europe. She filmed a documentary for the whole trip from Egypt to Belgium and won the "my life according to me"-festival award for her short movie "Selavi".

FILMOGRAPHY OF DIRECTOR

Selavi (2015)



UNDOCUMENTED LOVE 2018

FATMA OSMAN

Original title: Jacayl bila sharci
English title: Undocumented Love
Genre: Drama
Duration: 21 min
Year of Production: 2018
Country: Belgium
Screening Format: DCP
Color: Color
Language: Somali
Subtitles: English

Director: Fatma Osman
Screenplay: Fatma Osman, Hans Van Nuffel
Cast: Fatma Osman, Liban Abdullahi, Muna Hassan, Moudane Mahdieh, Ibrahim Mohamed
Assistant Director: Diren Agbaba
Mentor: Hans Van Nuffel
Cinematography: Esmoreit Lutters
Camera Assistant: Danilo Galivanes-Salcedo
Grip: Lennert Van Asselbergh
Colorgrading: Esmoreit Lutters
Sound Mix: Levi Mercurio
Sound: Ibrahim Mohamed, Asad Dirye
Sound Training: Oan Moonens
Editor: Guillaume Graux
Assistant Editor: Lennert Van Asselbergh
Post Production: Diren Agbaba, Kinshuk Surjan
Script Supervisor: Angela Al Souliman
MUA & Costume: Kevin Kola
Art Direction: Rand Abou Fakher, Bas Bonhof
Graphic Design: Lennert Van Asselbergh
Producers: Gwendolyn Lootens, Gawan Fagard
Line Producer: Diren Agbaba
Production: Cinemaximiliaan
Additional Cast: Jan Swinnen, Muna Yassin, Fortun Hassan, Rand Abou Fakher, Angela Al Souliman, Hans Van Nuffel, Alex Verhaest, Meriem Manikita

SHORT SYNOPSIS

A girl who is always trying to help her friends, giving them hope and showing them how to live life, will be left alone at the end.

LONG SYNOPSIS

A story of Amal, a girl who lives in an asylum centre with her friends. One day her best friend Muna leaves the centre and she is replaced by a strange girl Hamda. Hamda takes advantage of Amal to get her love. Amal, the girl who is always trying to help her friends by giving them hope and showing them how to live life, will be left alone at the end.

BIOGRAPHY OF DIRECTOR

Fatma Osman (Somalia, 1997) studied English and mathematics before coming to Belgium in 2015. Fatma is an aspiring filmmaker and journalist and is working as a volunteer with Cinemaximiliaan since september 2016.

FILMOGRAPHY OF DIRECTOR

First film

Production Team: Diren Agbaba, Angela Al Souliman, Oan Moonens, Lennert Van Asselbergh, Lubnan Al-Wazny, Edgar De Wolf, Daniel Teunissen, Jean-Murat Swinnen, Alex Verhaest

Catering: Fortun Hassan, Jan Swinnen, Limate Berhe, Maryam Nedjma, Muna Hassan, Muna Yassin, Ahmed Aden, Ilyas Abdullahi, Jean-Mourat Swinnen, Alex Verhaest, Reza Panahi, Batul Hosseini,

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CINEMAXIMILIAAN CONTACT

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