

PALESTINE FILM INSTITUTE (PFI)

The Palestine Film Institute (PFI) is proud to return to Durban Filmmart with a delegation of filmmakers and projects selected for its 2026 Palestine Film Hub Showcase. This marks the fourth year that PFI will present four feature films in progress to international industry representatives in Durban. Building on the strong industry attendance from previous years, the Showcase is part of PFI's broader initiative to develop, promote, and preserve Palestinian cinema while creating international opportunities for Palestinian filmmakers and producers.

The PFI's various international showcases are a vital component of the institute's mission to promote Palestinian cinema. Through this showcase, filmmakers and producers present their ongoing projects, allowing them to engage directly with decision-makers and the film industry.

The PFI's role in this showcase is to facilitate connections that can lead to meaningful outcomes, such as advancing projects, fostering partnerships, and establishing ways for long-term production and distribution.

We extend our gratitude to those who engage with and support these filmmakers, and we welcome partners committed not only to the films themselves but also to the narratives and structures that ensure their longevity.



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ECHOES OF THE UNSUNG

Echoes of the Unsung is an experimental documentary about, and made by, the Gazan rock band Osprey V, who have thus far survived the current genocide. Filmed over the course of more than three years of bombardment, the story follows the band as they are displaced by bombings within Gaza, then separated across borders. From songwriting without instruments to recording on the day the studio is bombed, every aspect of making music becomes a historical document of the conditions that make it impossible. This film is about the courage of overcoming this impossibility. As a musical journey that uses cinema to question what it means to be heard, the story unravels as it is being filmed, and the act of filming becomes central to the story itself. For example, our cameraman, Ismail, was killed in the Baqaa Cafe Massacre only two months after shooting many of this film's

scenes. Ismail's voice, speaking from behind the camera, haunts the film throughout. Witnessed in self-reflexive form, the act of risking our lives to produce this film becomes an enacted record of the resilience worth documenting. While the story moves through the band's archives, it also documents the archive's impossibility, since most belongings were destroyed in bombings. The act of filming is revealed to be a necessity, not only to document our experiences, knowing that it could be all that's left of us once we are killed, but also as a means of survival itself by producing content to gain life-saving opportunities. This film follows the success of the band as a defining factor in our survival and in the empowerment of others. This is the story of building infrastructure between communities of artists and musicians who are choosing life in the face of so much death.

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

This film developed from the necessity to document our realities of experiencing genocide, knowing it could be all that's left of us if we are killed. Since starting production, three people involved in this film have already been killed by the IDF. As a document of a rock band surviving war, who better to tell the story than the band itself? After directing our own music videos, we developed a filmic language, playing a crucial role left vacant by the vacuum left by all the murdered journalists.



Osprey V
DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Osprey V is a Gazan rock band that operates as a film and art collective. Our film *[Inaudible]* was screened at Festival Cine-Palestine (Paris), Santa Monica Art Center (Barcelona), Palinale Festival (Berlin), Diffusion Festival (Toronto), Giorno Poetry Systems (New York City), the Whitney Museum's ISP Exhibition (New York City), and the Rockbund Museum (Shanghai). Our music videos were screened at Palau Sant Jordi in Barcelona (with Rosalía, Tinariwen, and Bad Gyal), as well as during an online concert with Roger Waters, Tom Morello, and Brian Eno. Ash Moniz, our drummer, has screened work at the Sheffield International Documentary Film Festival, the Berlinale | Forum Expanded, among others.

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Audience Age Range: 14+

Country: Palestine, Egypt, Jordan, Spain

Production Company:

Running Time: 50 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 320 000 USD

Finances Committed: TBC

GOALS AT DFM

- Funding
- Attract investors who care about true stories of survival.
- Co-producing partner.
- Post-production resources.
- Sound design and engineering support.
- Networking and pitching opportunities.
- Distribution.



ON THE SEA ROAD

During the war on Gaza, under the roar of fighter jets, Nour asks me from a shelter in Khan Younis, "Isn't it funny that we are considered the same people?" Through a screen, she looks into my room in Yafa. I live as a Palestinian citizen of Israel; she shelters in Gaza. We are the same age, share the same national identity, yet inhabit radically different realities. We first meet through an online citizen journalism programme. As communication becomes increasingly unstable, our conversations move to WhatsApp. What begins as a practical exchange slowly becomes a friendship, then a lifeline. We each begin filming our own lives. The act of filming becomes our shared language. While Nour documents repeated displacement from Rafah to Khan Younis, temporary shelters, and a tent, I film the uneasy normality of Yafa, where cafés remain open and the sea appears unchanged. As our conversations deepen,

they move beyond survival into questions of womanhood, faith, family, marriage, and the futures we struggle to imagine. Much of what Nour records no longer exists, transforming her footage into an unintended archive of places destroyed while they were still being lived in. At the same time, my camera becomes a way of confronting the guilt and contradictions of watching war from relative safety. Through self-filmed footage, WhatsApp calls, voice notes, and moments of silence, *On the Sea Road* unfolds as an intimate dialogue between our two lives. Connected by the same sea yet separated by borders and war, *On the Sea Road* follows two Palestinian women trying to hold on to one another while war continually reshapes the distance between them.

Reel Previews 

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DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

On the Sea Road grows from a friendship forged under extraordinary circumstances. While Nour films life in Gaza, I film in Yafa, revealing unequal realities of two Palestinian women. Rather than making a film about Nour, we become authors of our images. Through self-representation, the film resists simplification, insisting on intimacy, contradiction, and remaining connected as history threatens disappearance.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Fitnat Waked is a Palestinian filmmaker and producer from Yafa working across documentary and fiction, with experience in documentary production and international media. Her work explores identity, memory, and belonging through intimate first-person storytelling. Her short documentary, *The Voices of Souls* (2025), was selected for the Al Jazeera Short Documentary Competition and released on Al Jazeera's digital platforms. In 2026, she completed her first narrative short, *SADA*. She is currently directing and producing her debut feature documentary, *On the Sea Road*.

COMPANY DETAILS

Fitnat Waked is an independent producer based in Yafa, dedicated to developing intimate, author-driven documentary and fiction films rooted in ethical, collaborative storytelling.



Fitnat Waked
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Audience Age Range: 16+

Country: Palestine

Production Company: Fitnat Waked
(Independent Producer)

Running Time: 75 minutes

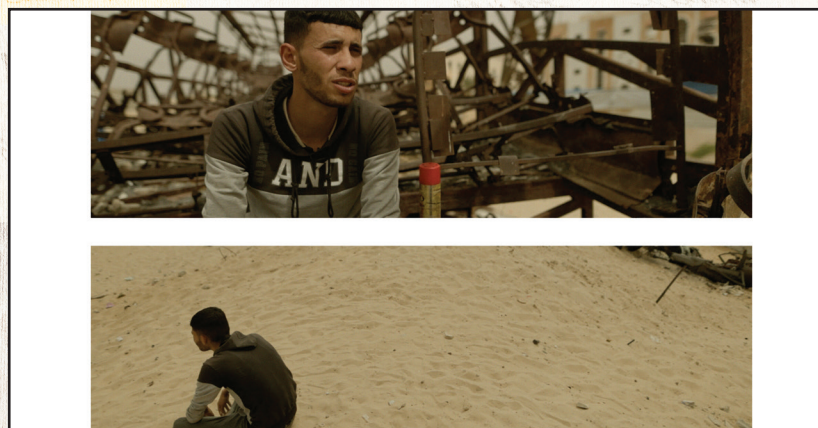
FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 54 000 USD

Finances Committed: 14 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Secure post-production financing.
- Connect with international co-producers.
- Connect with festival programmers.
- Connect with sales agents and distribution partners.



THE SOLE SURVIVOR "WHAT THE SAND REMEMBERS"

In Khan Younis, 2024, Abdulrahman Abu Hadda lives between two burial places: a cemetery holding some members of his family, and a vast mound of sand where the rest are believed to remain. After an Israeli strike destroyed his family home, Abdulrahman became the sole survivor. His parents, grandmother, and five siblings were killed. Some bodies were recovered and buried; others disappeared beneath the ruins, later covered by bulldozed earth and sand. With no grave to visit and no certainty to hold onto, Abdulrahman returns again and again to the site, searching for signs, fragments, and memories. What the Sand Remembers follows his life after survival. Moving through deserted streets, damaged neighbourhoods, and the landscape of loss, he carries the memory of an entire family alone. His daily routines become acts of remembrance: visiting graves, standing before the sand mound, recalling voices, and trying to rebuild a life in a place where the past remains physically buried beneath him. The film observes Abdulrahman

without turning his survival into triumph. His loneliness, silence, and repetition reveal the burden of being the only witness left. Through intimate testimony, restrained images, and the presence of the landscape itself, the film asks what remains when a family is erased but one person survives to remember them. His story is not presented as an exception, but as one intimate record of a wider devastation, where survival can mean carrying the names, gestures, and unfinished lives of those who no longer return home. The sand becomes more than a location. It is a grave, an archive, and a silent witness. As Abdulrahman searches for a way to live with what cannot be recovered, the film becomes a meditation on memory, absence, and the unbearable weight of survival.

Reel Previews

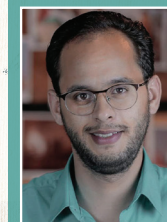


Company Profile



DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Through Abdulrahman, the sole survivor of an Israeli attack that erased his family, What the Sand Remembers explores the weight of memory, absence, and survival. Rather than documenting tragedy, the film observes the quiet rituals of remembrance and the fragile relationship between landscape and loss. I wanted silence, time, and the presence of the land itself to become witnesses. The film asks what remains when an entire family disappears, and whether the sand can preserve the traces that history tries to erase.



Yousef Nateel
PRODUCER



Mahmoud Abu Ghalwa
DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Mahmoud Abu Ghalwa is a Palestinian filmmaker, screenwriter, and creative producer with over 15 years' experience in documentary and fiction filmmaking. His work explores memory, displacement, and social justice through intimate cinematic storytelling. He has collaborated with international media organisations including Al Jazeera and Misbar, and his films have screened internationally. His screenplay for Nuseirat: The Hostage Massacre received the Best War Film Screenplay Award at the Five Continents International Film Festival.

Yousef Abdul Rahim Nateel is a Palestinian filmmaker and producer whose work focuses on socially engaged cinema and amplifying Palestinian voices globally.

COMPANY DETAILS

Hardy Skills is a creative media production company founded in Gaza in 2011, specialising in documentary films, media campaigns, animation, and digital storytelling. Operating across the Middle East and Europe, we create high-quality visual content that helps organisations and brands communicate their messages with creativity, clarity, and impact.

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Series

Audience Age Range: 16+

Country: Belgium, France, Palestine

Production Company: HardySkills

Running Time: 26 minutes per episode

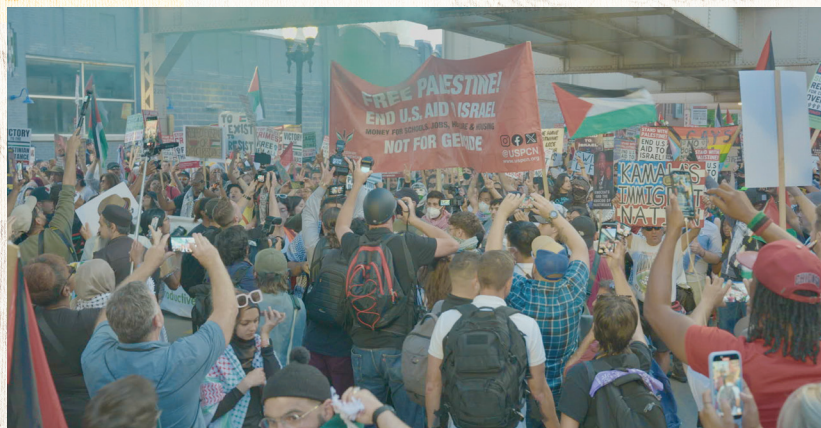
FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 100 000 USD

Finances Committed: 5 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Seeking funding, partners, sales, and festival support to complete this film and develop four more films about Gaza's sole survivors.



WITHIN SIGHT AND SOUND

On 14 October 2023, a white American man is watching TV news about Gaza in his home in Chicago. He becomes enraged by the news. "All these Palestinians are terrorists!" he yells, as he grabs a knife, walks to the home of his Palestinian neighbour, and stabs six-year-old child Wadee Al-Fayoumi 26 times, killing him. This brutal act of hate stuns Chicago's 'Little Palestine', the largest community of Palestinians in the United States. A weekly protest against the genocide begins the day after Waddeea's funeral. People in Chicago bear witness through social media videos from Gaza, even as they watch mainstream American news manufacture another narrative about what's happening. We see, visually, a city rise up to try to stop the genocide through university encampments, protests, direct actions, boycotts, voter mobilisation, etc. We document the beginning of a government crackdown against activists, first under President Biden and then President Trump. Palestinian activists are kidnapped, detained, and deported by Trump's immigration police. This quickly evolves from

targeting anti-war activists to targeting all Americans. The genocide in Gaza becomes the bellwether for a crackdown against democracy and the advent of fascism in the US. This film deconstructs how a media narrative that dehumanised Palestinians led directly to the murder of one Palestinian child in Chicago and the mass killing of tens of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza. Over and over again, power intervened in the historical production of the genocide to erase Palestinians and silence their story. This enabled Israel's mass killing and destruction in Gaza, and the US financing of the genocide, to continue unabated. We track how and when power entered the story, while documenting the Palestinian community in Chicago rallying to stop a genocide and resist erasure through the creation of a counter-narrative.

[Reel Previews](#)

[Company Profile](#)


DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

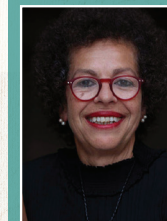
I grew up in Chicago's 'Little Palestine' and it was the setting for my first film, *The Feeling of Being Watched* (2018). When I attended the funeral of Wadde, the Palestinian boy murdered in 2023, something broke inside of me. As I watched the story of dehumanisation that killed Wadde be repeated to justify the genocide in Gaza, I felt compelled to start filming.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Assia Boundaoui is an award-winning Algerian-American filmmaker and journalist. Her debut short film, *J'adore Nawal*, set in an Arab women's hair salon in Chicago for HBO Films, premiered at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival. Her award-winning feature-length documentary, *The Feeling of Being Watched*, investigating a decade of FBI surveillance in her Arab-American community, had its world premiere at the 2018 Tribeca Film Festival and was broadcast on PBS and Al Jazeera. Her most recent short film, *Estranged Letters*, had its world premiere at the 2024 Chicago International Film Festival. **Jihan El-Tahri** is an Egyptian-French filmmaker, director, producer, writer, and visual artist. Her award-winning documentaries include *Nasser*, which premiered in the official selection at the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival, *Behind the Rainbow*, *Cuba: An African Odyssey*, and the Emmy-nominated *House of Saud*.

COMPANY DETAILS

At Big Sister, we tell stories from the vantage point of the South. Created by **Jihan El-Tahri** in 2004 and based in Europe, the company was one of the first to create a platform for cooperation with filmmakers from Africa and the Middle East.



Jihan El-Tahri
PRODUCER



Assia Boundaoui
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Audience Age Range: 16+

Country: United States of America, France, Tunisia

Production Company: Big Sister Productions, Watched Films LLC

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 410 000 USD

Finances Committed: 280 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Post-production funding.
- African and international co-production partner.