



AGHDASHLOO  
BICHIEVA  
CARR-GOMM  
FITZSIMMONS  
HSIEH  
HUNDUMA  
LIM  
MIDDLETON  
PARIS  
SMITH  
TADOUNT AND  
CHOUAIB  
WARING  
WHITE  
WRIGHT  
WRIGHT  
VYMERIS  
ZENG

IMAGE: NICOLE JOSEPH IN "ARENA"

**THE 7TH 225 FILM CLUB FESTIVAL**

**BFI SOUTHBANK FRIDAY 5 DECEMBER 2025**

NORLHODA  
DALI

OMAR  
SALEM

# YA HANOUNI

A FILM BY  
LYNA TADOUNT & SOFIAN CHOUAIB

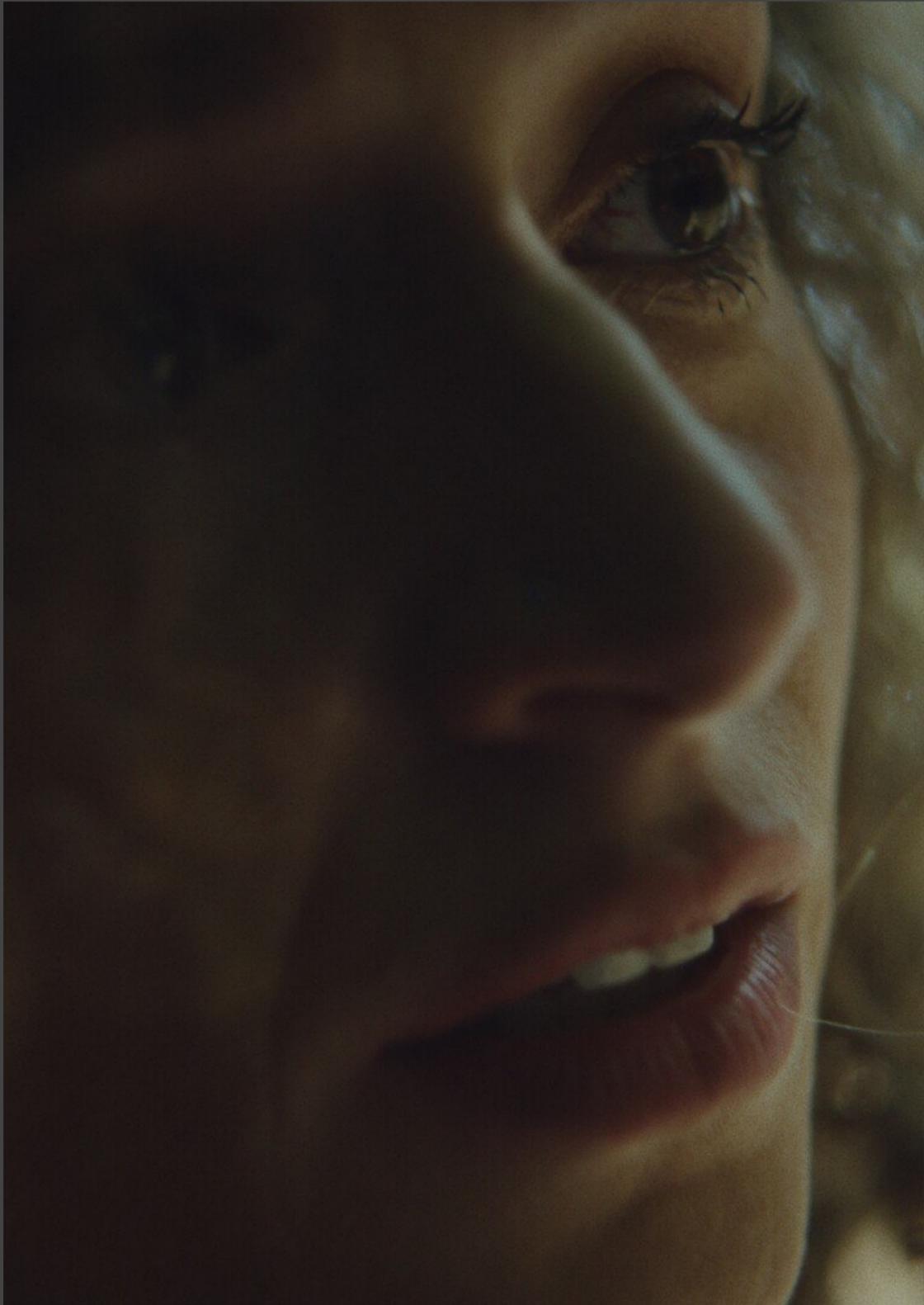
WITH HICHAM HAMDAOUI & BILAL-AMINE BACHIR  
1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ZEPHIR CULMANN CINEMATOGRAPHER AXEL DOS SANTOS  
PRODUCTION DESIGNER MAXIME LE BRETON CAMERA ASSISTANT THOMAS MIREAU GAFFER JONATHAN FARO  
SOUND ENGINEER PIERRE CARLIER SOUND MIXER MATHIS KUNTZ MAKE-UP ARTIST LARA GOURG LOCATION MANAGER CYNTHIA MEIER

## YA HANOUNI LYNA TADOUNT, SOFIAN CHOUAIB

*“Ya Hanouni carries the ambition to show directly a glimpse of what war, massacre and genocide are, to put into perspective the numerous videos of bombings we see daily and to remind people that the civilians killed and the victims undergoing the violence of ongoing injustice, oppression and crimes against humanity are just like you and me. People, humans, children, fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and the list goes on.*

*Thus, our goal was that the viewer could put themselves in the place of one of these lives, and the best way was literally to put them into the perspective of a baby. With this short film, we hope to raise awareness about what is happening, unfortunately, in different parts of the world, and to remind everyone that behind each and every cipher there was a dream, a will, a hope, a smile, a cry, a laugh, a memory, a life.”*

*(Extracts from a longer piece)*



## **BRIDGE** **TARA AGHDASHLOO**

*“We live in a world that makes it easy to feel disconnected, no matter how technologically connected we are.*

*Bridge is a story of a chance encounter and the desire to be heard, to be vulnerable and honest. In the story, this happens through a phone call on a busy day at an NHS medical centre. I loved the challenge of creating a cinematic language and dramatic arc to the wonderfully resonant poem by Gemma Barnett which we adapted.*

*Gemma’s performance as the lead was also incredibly powerful and intimate, and Bianca Beckles-Rose on the other side of the call, creates a riveting dynamic. For me cinema is the language of poetry, and the beats of the story will surprise and disarm you (hopefully) with an expressive tone.”*



# MILK

GREAT SCOTT FILMS PRESENTS "MILK"  
MUSIC BY JONNY COLGAN SOUND BY SAM MASON EDITOR ANGEL ZAPATERO PRODUCTION DESIGNER LUNAH COSTUME DESIGNER JASON AIR  
HAIR AND MAKEUP NEDIAN BIGGS DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY VINCENZO MARRANGHINO GAFFER TOM XU  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS SIENNA MILLER ARMEN NAHABEDIAN BERNADETTE FLYNN  
PRODUCED BY FERN SCOTT WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY NAOMI WARING

## MILK NAOMI WARING

*"I made Milk to explore an issue that creates deep conflict for women — another way our bodies are weaponised against us, often by other women. After learning about the formula crisis and the shame and lack of support families were facing,*

*I felt compelled to tell this story. But it was essential to approach it with heart and creativity. I didn't want to make another 'poverty porn' film; I wanted Alisha to have a rich inner world, full of intelligence, imagination, and vision. The film's images reflect that.*

*At its core, Milk is about hope, community, and connection — the only real options we have left. I wanted to make something poetic that could settle into an audience's heart and mind."*

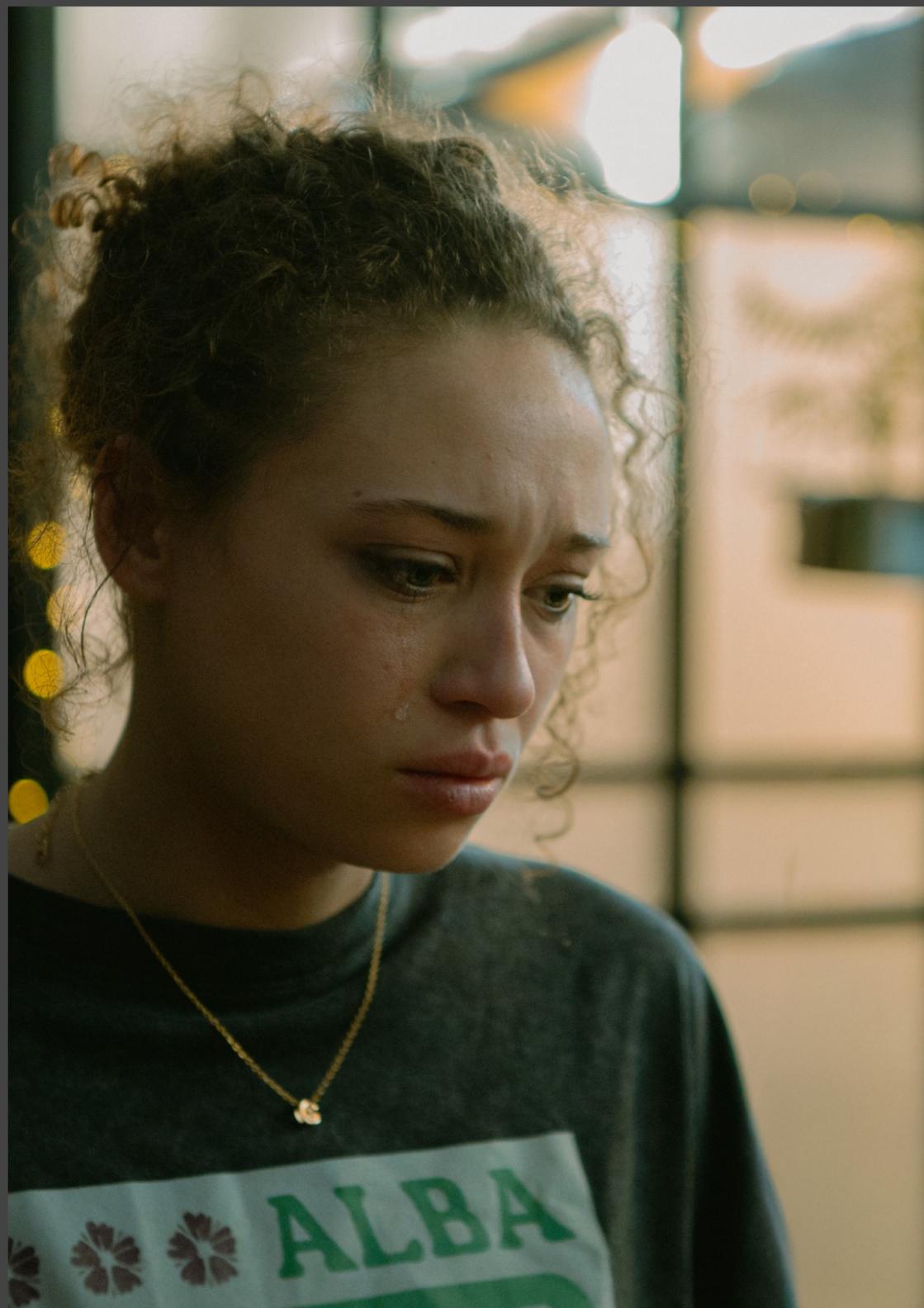


## **SPEAK WITH THE DEAD STEPHANIE PARIS**

*“Speak With The Dead was inspired by the true story of the Fox Sisters and their travels throughout the 1850s as mediums, as well as the struggles they encountered with religious zealots and themselves as they weighed the ethics of what they were doing.*

*In a time when women had incredibly limited opportunities, they not only made a thriving career from their travels but became famous as the godmothers of the spiritualist movement.”*

*(Extracts from a longer piece)*



## PARANOIA ALINA BICHIEVA

*“Paranoia was born out of my lived experience as a young woman navigating a big city. Existing in modern society means moving through the world with a heightened sense of alertness, constantly negotiating between real danger and the threats manufactured by your own mind. You learn to walk faster when a noise echoes behind you, to grip pepper spray in your pocket, to send your friends a live location every time you get into an Uber.*

*Yet so often, it becomes impossible to distinguish whether you’re truly unsafe or whether anxiety is colouring every corner of your imagination. I’ve lost count of the moments where fear overtook me before I even understood what I was afraid of. Paranoia was born from this constant tension women live with every day.”*

*(Extracts from a longer piece)*



## **SWIM SISTAS CATHERINE JOY WHITE**

*“Swim Sistas is my love letter to water, to sisterhood and to resilience. It is a celebration of four extraordinary Black women, from an Olympic trailblazer to a 54-year-old first-time swimmer, who are reclaiming space and joy in the water.”*

*Blending documentary with visual poetry and the ancestral voice of Mami Wata, (narrated by the incomparable Naomi Harris) the film pushes the form into new territory while centring belonging, courage, and the quiet radicalism of joy.*

*Historically, Black women may have been excluded from aquatic spaces. Swim Sistas offers not an elegy to that exclusion but a declaration of presence. We’ve always been swimming. And we will keep swimming. We all deserve to feel the freedom of what it is to float.”*



**HOT MESS**  
**TORTOR SMITH**

*“Hot Mess is a multi-layered exploration of what it is like to be diagnosed late with ADHD, from the trauma one suffers growing up to the grief they experience finally figuring it out.”*

*I wanted this film to be compact and creative, a hyper-focused snapshot into the ADHD experience.*

*My goal with this film is to raise visibility but also to open up conversations.”*



**THE TEST**  
**HSIEH MENG HAN**

*“The Test has a double meaning.*

*It refers not only to the Life in the UK test but also to a test that all immigrants have gone through, are going through, and will continue to face: a test of enduring micro-aggressions.”*



## **ARENA (STUDENT FILM) SIMIN ZENG**

*“Arena was born out of my working experience in the film industry. It examines how systems of power operate between directors and actors, and how easily one’s autonomy can be compromised in the pursuit of aesthetic and artistic excellence.”*

*Through the lens of a non-binary protagonist, I aim to reveal not only the visible struggles but also the quiet, internal conflicts that often go unnoticed. I want Arena to do more than provoke empathy or outrage. It asks viewers to recognise that images are never neutral, but shaped by aesthetic preference, technical choices and institutional pressures.*

*The film invites scrutiny of the mechanisms behind filmmaking. Exploring themes such as visibility, identity, and vulnerability, and asks who defines, who is defined, and what role we as spectators occupy within that dynamic.”*



**MORNING**  
**OLIVIA JANE MIDDLETON**

*“This film is defined by its silence. Its purity comes from the relationship between sound and image, and it’s a piece I feel deeply aligned with.”*



## **BLUFF** **NAOMI WRIGHT**

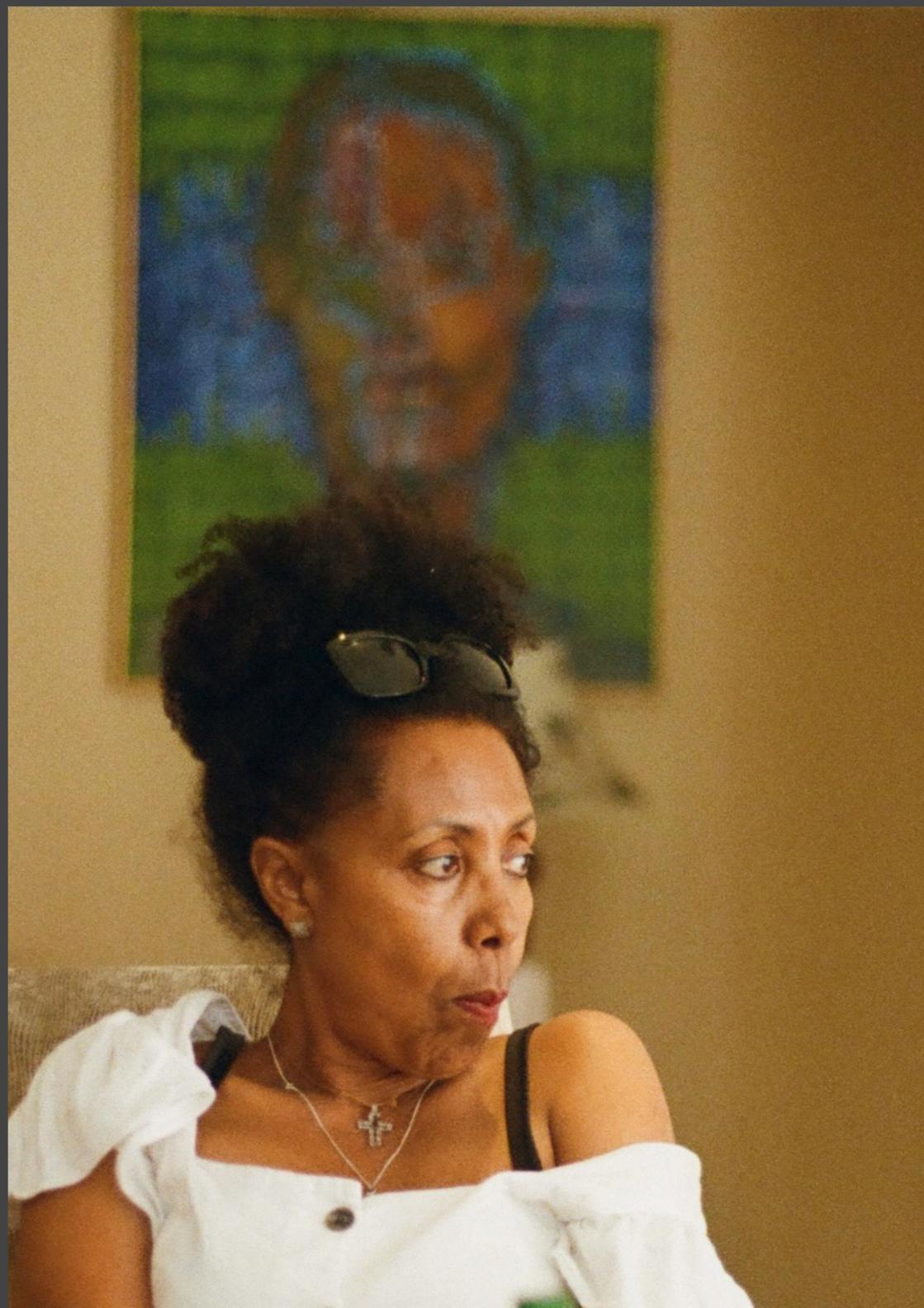
*“Bluff was in part inspired by my own experience of visual impairment as a young girl. In making this film, we wanted to show the pressure that childhood sight loss can place on a family, and the fight to be heard that so often comes with it – something I’ve never seen on screen before.”*

*Georgie Wyatt, Co Writer/Associate Director*

*“I’ve long been interested in experimenting with how far a film can go in placing the audience right inside the experience of the protagonist – pushing cinematography and sound design to become as immersive and embodied as possible. Working closely with Georgie to reflect her reality,*

*Bluff has been a chance to test these ideas, and has shown us how we might take them further in the feature film we’ve been developing together, Blind Ambition.”*

*Naomi Wright, Director/Co Writer*



## THE MEDALLION RUTH HUNDUMA

*“In a world with technological over-abundance and mass media, many voices remain in the dark, the deepest fear being they remain unheard, or worse, ignored. It is not a coincidence that the vast majority of these voices resemble each other, particularly in the Western World... this is something that I like to call selective solidarity. The Ethiopian Red Terror genocide in the 70s came and went, claiming hundreds of thousands of souls, and yet, remained unknown to the world. A history erased. The Medallion is an exploration of this tragic period in Ethiopia’s past through the brave lens of my mother: Tsehay Ayele.*”

*Through travailing the cataclysmic event that was the genocide through my mother’s memories, it was impossible to not draw comparisons to the present day. The Medallion was made in the midst of the Tigray War, which came and went (2020-2022) and identical to the tragedy of the past, remained relatively unknown in the Western World. The suffering of my people was again neglected and unheard. This is our attempt to change that.*

*I often find most films pertaining to war and Africa to be shrouded with a bottomless bleakness and hopelessness. That is not how I see Africa, and that is not how I see Ethiopia. Ethiopia is a deeply mystical, beautiful, and complex land; I wanted to mirror that with every fabric of the film. This is a viewing experience that doesn't shy away from tragedy or soften the blow, but rather makes it live harmoniously with visual beauty as a brutal truth. After all, the beauty of the country does not exist separate from the tragedy; it in fact deepens the tragedy. The mountains and blood red sunsets will still be there before and after the war. It's sinister, and awful to think about, but true.*

*This film is my attempt to humanize the face of war, give back the voices of all those that are swept under the carpet or simply taxonomized as “collateral damage” at the hands of forces greater than themselves. This film is for the forgotten.”*



**MY GRIEF ISN'T GRIEF ENOUGH**  
**JEN LIM**

*"My Grief Isn't Grief Enough explores universal themes I had touched upon in previous work, but which I had always known I would one day tackle through the lens of suicide.*

*Largely formed through improvisation, the film is an expression of how helplessness and guilt in the face of such a loss can create an ugly battle of culpability, even when there is nothing or no one to blame."*



**I'M NOT SURE**  
**MYLISSA FITZSIMMONS**

*“It’s not black and white, it’s a film about the gray areas and how we communicate while trying to navigate the nuances of intimacy”*



**MOTHER GOOSE**  
**JOANNA VYMERIS**

*“Mother Goose is a ridiculous, hilarious and absurd take on loneliness, isolation and grief. Thanks to the superb performances from Sophie Thompson, Ralph Ineson and a few geese, it’s been resonating beautifully with audiences and we can’t wait to share it as far and wide as possible.*”

*We developed this modern Brothers Grimm fairytale as a no budget passion project but thanks to the belief of the team who shot it and For The Silver Screen who awarded it their analogue production support, it’s grown into something so much more than that! HONK!”*



**RETURN**  
**SOPHIA CARR-GOMM**

*“Since the passing of our lead actor, Peter Faulkner, Return carries an added poignancy.*

*The film follows his physical and metaphorical journey, a shamanic passage through a landscape of grief, as he seeks to return to his beloved, even if the only way back is through death.”*



## **HIGHWAY TO THE MOON** **LETITIA WRIGHT**

*“Highway To The Moon started as my desire to write a love letter to young black boys all over the world. Especially young black boys in London, UK.*”

*It was 2018, and the news of the model Harry Ozoka’s murder went viral online. I felt really confused, how did a well known model, a young trailblazer in his industry get stabbed to death by his own friend? It didn’t add up, usually we are told that these young men are a part of a gang or some other stereotypical explanation for their actions.”*

*“I remember feeling numb, whenever I see news of a young black boy being stabbed, it’s someone I don’t know but my heart aches at the news. Though it hurts, it never feels so close to home. So when Harry passed away, it impacted me differently, I saw him a few years ago walking down Shoreditch High Street in London, or walking in a fashion week show. I immediately began to wonder why? Why are our black boys hurting each other like this?”*

*(Extracts from a longer piece)*

CREATIVE & FESTIVAL DIRECTOR, *RITA OSEI*

FESTIVAL PATRON, *SIRE RAMOS*

REVIEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS,  
CRITIC *SARAH CARTLAND*

FESTIVAL PHOTOGRAPHER, *ZUZU VALLA*

FESTIVAL MC, *MOHINI KOTECHA* (“HALF FILM & TV LAWYER, HALF COMEDIAN”)

JURY, *BRENDA GILBERT* (CHAIR), *COLIN LAVIOLA*, *CRISTIAN JIMENEZ*, *DANIELLE GOFF*,  
*NIDA MANZOOR*, *SHEILA NORTLEY*, *SUSAN SIMNETT*

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*MELANIE HOYES*, SENIOR DIRECTOR BFI INCLUSION

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