



Our River... Our Sky

a narrative feature film by Maysoon Pachachi



Gala event in Dubai for the IWC Filmmaker Award 2012

INTRODUCTION

Our River...Our Sky is the first internationally co-produced narrative feature film written and directed by a female filmmaker of Iraqi origin – the London-based film producer / director / editor Maysoon Pachachi.

Co-written with Irada Al-Jubori - a Baghdad-based writer of fiction - the film offers an authentic insider's perspective to the contemporary Iraqi narrative.

In 2012, the script won the \$100,000 IWC Schaffhausen Gulf Filmmaker Award at Dubai International Film Festival - presented to the film's director by Head of Jury, Cate Blanchett.

LEAD ARTISTIC & TECHNICAL TEAM

Writer & Director

Co-Writer

Production, Set & Costume Designer

Head of Production

Cinematographer

Sound Recordist

Hair Stylist & Makeup Artist

Editor

Sound Designer

VFX Director

Music Composers

Consulting Producer

Casting Director

1st Assistant Directors

Maysoon PACHACHI

Irada AL-JUBORI

Rayah AASEE

Ghassan ABDALLAH

Jonathan BLOOM

François WALEDISCH

Kazem ABBASSHIRAZI

Alexandre DONOT

André STIEBE

Luc SERRANO

Mario SCHNEIDER

Ehsan EMAM

Khyam ALLAMI

Chris CURLING

Leila BERTRAND, CDG

Haidar HAKIM

Ahmed YASEEN





CAST MEMBERS

NAME

Darina AL JOUNDI
Zainab AL-GHANIMI
Basim HAJAR
Labwa ARAB
Amed HASHIMI
Meriam ABBAS
Mahmoud Abo AL ABBAS
Badia OBAID
Zaydun KHALAF
Suzan MUNEAM
Sami AL-ALI
Siham MUSTAFA
Kholod MOHAMAD
Ali EL KAREEM
Kameran RAOOF
Mustafa MOHAMMED
Muslem HASSOUN

ROLE

Sara
Reema
Kamal
Mona
Yahya
Dijla
Abu Haider
Sabiha
Kareem
Khairiya
Nabil
Nermeen
Tamara
Boatman
Professor Sami
People Smuggler
Haider



LOGLINE

In a typically mixed Baghdadi neighbourhood, the stories of a novelist and her neighbours unfold and intersect, as their lives are torn apart by extreme sectarian violence while nightly curfews trap them inside their homes.

Zainab AL-GHANIMI as REEMA.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Baghdad, 2006. SARA is a single mother and novelist, shocked into silence, at a time of extreme sectarian violence and nightly curfews in Baghdad. She and her neighbours let us into their everyday lives, as they struggle to resist the fragmentation of their world and renew a fragile sense of hope and belief in a better future.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Baghdad. The last week of 2006. All over the city, people of different religions are being forced out of their homes on a daily basis and neighborhoods are being divided by concrete walls. At night, under curfew, the residents remain trapped inside their houses...

SARA hunches over her computer obsessively scouring the internet: How many dead today? As her daughter sleeps fitfully against a muted background of mortars and gunfire, her mother scribbles numbers on scraps of paper and sticks them to a map of Baghdad stuck on the wall. At least if she keeps track of the attacks she can try to predict where the next one may happen...

Sara is a novelist but no matter how hard she tries, she cannot write any more. It would all just be a lie anyway. Maybe she and her daughter should leave this unlivable place? Yet everything that matters to her is here and Reema seems alright; she tells jokes, plays tricks. But Reema knows much more than she tells her mother...

When Sara's closest friend and neighbor, SABIHA, a former actress and a Christian, is forced into exile by a sectarian gang, Sara begins to fight back and recover a sense of defiance. But the random killing of Reema's school bus driver causes Sara to re-think things and she starts to look for a way out...

Sara and Reema's story intersects with those of their neighbours: KAMAL, a former prisoner-of-war in Iran who is trying to erase the past; his pregnant wife MONA, who can't forget her children from a past marriage; and her mother NERMEEN, whose son was 'disappeared' by the regime. Elsewhere, Sara's manic-depressive friend DIJLA is always hunting for 'happy pills' while the pretty college student TAMARA keeps herself busy with music and fashion to distract herself from an unbearable reality. HAIDER, a teenager on the cusp of manhood, is being drawn into a sectarian gang as his father ABU HAIDER takes to the bottle. YAHYA, Sara's brother, has to choose between accepting bribes to stay in his job or leave the country too.

In spite of a fresh bomb attack, Sara regains a renewed sense of defiance and resistance. She takes her daughter to the Tigris River for the first time. Sitting at the riverbank, they agree that Baghdad belongs to them and they will not leave it.



Maysoon Pachachi on location in Iraq.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I'm a filmmaker of Iraqi origin with deep roots in that country and, at the same time, I am a Londoner who has lived in the city for almost all of my adult life. I often feel like a person whose home is on a bridge with a view of both sides of the river.

Iraqis have lived through decades of dictatorship, war and sanctions and since 2003, ongoing extreme daily violence and chaos. Their lives are ruptured and full of loss, with no breathing space to process and repair. This is the emotional context in which people get on with daily lives in a situation where the unthinkable has become the norm, where you have to 'act life' as people in Sarajevo used to say. The powerful external circumstances affect everyone and create a sense that you are living a story that is at the same time personal, and collective.

I and my co-writer, Irada Al-Jubori, an Iraqi novelist, were interested in finding a fictional form which would reflect this experience.

Our film takes place in Baghdad, in the last week of 2006, a time of extreme sectarian violence and nightly curfews. Connected individual stories, each with its own trajectory, unfold simultaneously and, together, they describe a collective drama happening in this particular time and place. How you tell the story is part of the story.

I am interested, not so much in what happens but in what we as human beings do with what happens. When the world inside and outside us is fragmenting, how do we keep a sense of our self and our story, how do we hold our life together? How do we survive psychically, emotionally? Where do we find the will and the courage to resist the damage and renew a fragile sense of hope every morning? Can we be true to our values and beliefs? What do we tell our children? Can we retain any sense of community? How?

This is what our film is about and was in part inspired by dialogue and scenes, which I and my co-writer, Irada, heard and saw in Iraq in 2006/7. Using this real-life source material as a springboard, we created our fictional narrative, making the feelings of our characters present in the way that drama makes possible, while at the same time, trying to express the energy, danger and chaos of the wider reality in which they live.

We feel that it's especially important now for stories of individual resistance and hope to be told about the Middle East, where so many still manage to maintain solidarity with one another as human beings, in spite of the intensely divisive pressures of religion and politics, with which they are living.



BIOGRAPHY FOR MAYSOON PACHACHI

Writer, Director and Producer

Maysoon Pachachi is a London-based filmmaker of Iraqi origin. She was educated in Iraq, the USA and the UK. She studied Philosophy at University College London (BA Hons) and then filmmaking at the London Film School. She was for many years a documentary and drama film editor in the UK, and has worked since 1994 as an independent documentary film director, largely making films in and about the Middle East.

Maysoon has also taught film directing and editing in Britain and Palestine (in Jerusalem, Gaza and at Birzeit University). In 2004, with her colleague, Iraqi filmmaker, Kasim Abid, she co-founded INDEPENDENT FILM & TELEVISION COLLEGE, a free-of-charge film-training centre in Baghdad, whose students produced 17 short documentary films, shown at festivals and screenings internationally and within Iraq at a traveling festival.

FILMOGRAPHY OF MAYSOON PACHACHI

VOICES FROM GAZA (Channel 4 – UK, 1990, 52 mins) (producer/editor)

In reaction to 20 years of Israeli occupation, Gazans rise up in a show of solidarity and collective action.

**Red Ribbon Award* American Film and Video Festival, San Francisco*

IRAQI WOMEN - VOICES FROM EXILE (Channel 4 – UK, 1994, 52 mins) (director/producer)

Modern Iraqi history recounted through the experiences of Iraqi women living in exile in London.

IRANIAN JOURNEY (ZDF/Arte, 1999, 83 mins) (director)

A documentary road-movie about the only woman in the Islamic world working as a long-distance bus driver.

**First Prize* Kalamata International Documentary Festival, 2000*

LIVING WITH THE PAST: People and Monuments in Medieval Cairo (ECHO Productions - USA, 2001, 52 mins)

(director)

A portrait of Cairo's Darb Al Ahmar, a neighborhood in the heart of the old city facing a process of radical change.

BITTER WATER (Legend Productions/Oxymoron Films - UK, 2003, 76 mins) (co-director/producer)

Documentary about 4 generations of refugees in a Palestinian camp in Beirut.

RETURN TO THE LAND OF WONDERS (ZDF/Arte, 2004, 88 mins) (director/producer/camera/editor)

Made about the filmmaker's return journey to Baghdad in 2004, after more than 35 years.

OUR FEELINGS TOOK THE PICTURES: OPEN SHUTTERS IRAQ (Oxymoron Films – UK, 2008, 102 mins)

(director/producer/camera/editor)

12 women from 5 Iraqi cities, produce photo stories about their lives in Iraq.

**Jury Special Mention* Arab Film Festival Rotterdam, 2009*



BIOGRAPHY FOR IRADA AL-JUBORI

Co-Writer

Irada Al-Jubori was born in Kerbala, Iraq. She is a writer, researcher and women's rights activist. From Baghdad University, she holds a MA from the College of Arts and a PhD from the College of Mass Communication. The subject of her doctoral thesis was the image of women in Iraqi cinema 1946-1994. At present, she is a Professor and Assistant Dean of post-graduate studies at the College of Mass Communication, Baghdad University, as well as editor of Baghdad University's Media Researcher Journal.

In 2006/7 she was Iraqi project manager on Open Shutters Iraq, a participatory photography project involving women from 5 cities in Iraq. The project produced a body of work which was exhibited internationally, a dual-language book and a documentary film, directed by Maysoon Pachachi. In 2011, Irada and Maysoon Pachachi wrote the first draft of *Kulshi Makoo* (Arabic title for Pachachi's debut narrative feature film). Additionally, Irada has written five collections of short stories, a novel and a book for children.

BIOGRAPHY FOR PATRICE NEZAN

Producer



Patrice Nezan has been active as a producer for the last fifteen years. His starting point was to build bridges between film directors and contemporary artists for the dance, music, visual art worlds. He believed – and still does – that confronting these different artistic grammars, would nourish creative and innovative film proposals, with the willingness of researching what's beyond the world. This editorial line allowed him to collaborate with filmmakers such as Claudio Papienza, Claude Mourieras, Olivier Mégaton, Catherine Maximoff, Mats Grorud, Jan Komasa, Jan P. Matuszynski and artists such as Alain Platel, Georges Aperghis, Clarisse Hahn, Antoine Boutet, Akram Khan, Wayne McGregor.

Patrice Nezan is member of ACE Producers, EAVE, EAVE+, SPI, Unifrance, Sources2, European Film Academy, GROUPE QUEST Less Is More and the Cesar Académie. Patrice has regularly been invited at coproduction markets (BERLINale Coproduction Market, CANNES Producers Network, TORINO FilmLab, ROTTERDAM Cinemart, LES ARCS Coproduction Village, SARAJEVO Cinelink, BUSAN Asian Film Market, CAIRO Film Connexion...). The films he produced have been selected in international festivals such as CANNES, VENISE, TORONTO, LOCARNO, ROME, ANNECY, BUSAN, MARRAKECH, TOKYO, NYON Visions du Réel...

His two new feature films were selected for the Oscars 2020 : CORPUS CHRISTI, the fiction feature was OSCAR nominee for the Academy Award Ceremony 2020, and WARDI, the animated feature was OSCAR candidate in animation category.

COMPANY PROFILE – LES CONTES MODERNES

Les Contes Modernes, i.e. The Modern Tales, aims at taking part in intellectual debates within our contemporary societies by any means necessary (fiction, animation, creative documentary and VR).

Les Contes Modernes federates authors and artists of various horizons (film directors, visual artists, choreographers, graphic novelists, philosophers, game-designers etc.) who question the world surrounding us in all its complexity and who put the esthetic search at the heart of their creations. Our artistic process in favor of body movement more than dialogues is an attempt to draw a universal language, to step across the borders.

Les Contes Modernes is a production company based in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, South of France, between Lyon and Marseille, in La Cartoucherie, center of excellency for the animation industry.

Les Contes Modernes supports projects which develop a humanist, empathic and creative approach on the world of today and tomorrow.

Our River...Our Sky is an international co-production between UK-France-Germany-Kuwait-UAE-Qatar.

PRODUCERS:

(in order of participation, chronologically)

Maysoon PACHACHI & Talal AL-MUHANNA (Oxymoron Films / UK)
Talal AL-MUHANNA (Linked Productions / Kuwait)
Patrice NEZAN & Laurent VERSINI (Les Contes Modernes / France)
Alexander RIS (Neue Mediopolis Filmproduktion / Germany)

CO-PRODUCERS:

Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Cinéma (France)
Lightburst Pictures (Germany)

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS:

(in order of participation, chronologically)

Omar AL-MASAB (OFilms), Ra-Ana GILANI, Chipu CHUNG, Tom CLARK

CO-LINE PRODUCERS:

Masti Film Production Company (Sulaymaniyah & Baghdad) &
Fuad Jalal RASHEED (local producer)

Ishtar Iraq Film Productions (Baghdad) &
Huda AL KADHIMI (local producer)

FUNDERS *(listed alphabetically)*

Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation-ADMAF (United Arab Emirates)
Arab Fund for Arts & Culture - AFAC (Lebanon)
British Film Institute (United Kingdom)
Brot für die Welt (Germany)
CNC (France)
Creative Europe Programme – MEDIA of the European Union
Doha Film Institute (Qatar)
Eurimages (European Union)
Institut Français (France)
Indiegogo (crowdfunding support)
IWC Schaffhausen Filmmaker Award & Dubai International film Festival (United Arab Emirates)
Media Mundus (European Union)
MDM Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung (Germany)
Région Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (France)
Regional Audiovisual cooperation (United Arab Emirates Embassy of France)
SANAD The Development and Post-Production Fund of twofour54 Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates)
Visions Sud Est - SDC Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (Switzerland)

Indiegogo crowdfund major donors (listed alphabetically):

Leo AMERY, Jonathan CURLING, Sanjyot P. DUNUNG, Gabriele MUZIO, Dina SABA and Daniel & Sarah SINGAL

FIRST FESTIVALS

World Premiere : SARAJEVO Film Festival 2021

North America Premiere : SAN FRANCISCO Arab Film Festival 2021

MENA Premiere : CAIRO International Film Festival 2021

Iraqi Premiere : SLEMANI International Film Festival 2021

South Asian Premiere : TRIVANDRUM International Film Festival of Kerala 2022

French Premiere : LYON Institut Lumière - Regard Sud festival

Screening France : PARIS Institut du Monde Arabe 2022

German Premiere : BERLIN Alfilm Arab Film Festival 2022

Screenings Iraq : BAGHDAD French Institute of Iraq 2022

BAGHDAD Franco-Arab film festival 2022

BAGHDAD & MOSUL The Station 2022

Swedish Premiere : MALMO Arab Film Festival 2022

Screening Egypt : CAIRO Cinema Days 2022

Dutch Premiere : ROTTERDAM Arab Film Festival 2022

Jordan Premiere : AMMAN International Film Festival 2022

British Premiere : LONDON Raindance 2022

Screening France : METZ Festival du Film Arabe 2022

Moroccan Premiere : CASABLANCA Casablanca Arab Film Festival 2022

Screening France : ROMAINVILLE Festival du Film Franco-Arabe 2022

WINNER UAE: Special Jury Award - Best Debut Film META Film festival UAE 2022

WON Best Ensemble Performance at BRITISH Independent Film Awards on December 4th 2022

National release United Kingdom

September 2023

National release Germany

September 2023

WORLD SALES

Sales Agent :	The Party Film Sales
Address :	9 rue Ambroise Thomas, 75009 Paris
Country :	France
Contact persons :	Samuel Blanc, Co-Head of International Sales
E-mail :	sales@thepartysales.com
Website :	www.thepartysales.com

ARAB WORLD / MENA DISTRIBUTOR

Company:	MAD Distribution
Address:	Salah Eldin Street, Third Floor, Flat 10 – Zamalek, Cairo
Country:	Egypt
Contact	Moshira Farouk, Cultural and Theatrical Distribution Manager
E-mail:	moshira.bahar@mad-solutions.com
Telephone:	+2 02 2735 7937
Mobile:	+201224010362
Website:	www.madsolutions.com

The World Sales agent for the film is The Party Film Sales (France).
The Arab world distributor is MAD Distribution (Egypt/UAE).

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

English title: Our River...Our Sky
Arabic title: Kulshi Makoo
Genre: Drama (colour)
Duration: 117 minutes
Year filmed: 2019
Filming locations: Sulaymaniyah - Iraqi Kurdistan and Baghdad - Iraq
Year completed: 2021-2022
Original language: Arabic
Subtitled versions: English, French, Arabic
Dubbed versions: German
Shooting format: HD - 3K
Projection format/Aspect ratio: DCP - 2K / 1:2,39 Scope (2048 x 858)
DCP speed : 24fps
Sound: 5.1
Broadcast formats: H264 | PRORES 422 - 24 fps - 5,1 & stereo (112 mins)
H264 | PRORES 422 - 25 fps - 5.1 & stereo (112 mins)
ISAN: ISAN 0000-0004-DBDA-0000-S-0000-0000-R

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Rhône-Alpes Cinema - Lightburst Pictures – ALL RIGHTS RESERVED



Meriam ABBAS as DIJLA (L) and Darina AL JOUNDI as SARA (R)



Karam THAMER as EMAD, YOUNG POLICEMAN

COMPANY CONTACT

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Website: www.lescontesmodernes.fr

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SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook page: Our River Our Sky
Twitter: @AnotherDayinB

Note: Previous titles for the film, while in development, included "Nothing Doing in Baghdad" and "Another Day in Baghdad"

