

CIRCLE

CIRCLE is an international training initiative offering a safe space for women and gender-expansive filmmakers seeking support to develop their films and professional skills

CIRCLE Women Doc Accelerator 2024-25

THREE TAILOR MADE SESSIONS

Focusing on different aspects of project & career development

RAND BEIRUTY • Director & Producer (Jordan)

PORTRAIT OF A



DIRECTOR Rand Beiruty

PRODUCER Rand Beiruty (Shaghab Films)

LENGTH 90 min

COUNTRY OF PRODUCTION Jordan

STAGE OF PRODUCTION Development

SYNOPSIS

At 16, Andrea dreams of love, freedom, and life beyond her parents' strict home. She meets Andrei, 15, and falls in love. In a rush of passion, she defies her family and elopes with him. At 19, she is confined to domestic routines in her in-laws' East German apartment. Through a blend of documentary modes, the film portrays Andrea navigating motherhood and her husband's betrayal, highlighting shared struggles, resilience and celebrating the strength and complexity of Roma women.

LOGLINE

Andrea, a charming young Roma immigrant, confronts the complexities of young love, infidelity, and motherhood. Through a blend of long-term observational documentary with song and performance, we explore the emotional and cultural landscapes that define Andrea's experiences and aspirations.



BIOGRAPHY

Rand Beiruty is a writer, director, and co-founder of Shaghab Films, a production company based in Amman, Jordan. She holds a practice-based Ph.D. revolving around questions of representation and participatory filmmaking from the Film University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF. She has pitched her projects on international platforms and received awards from, among others, the Tribeca Film Institute, Mifa Animation du Monde, the Arab Cinema Center, and the European Network of Young Cinema. Her debut feature documentary *Tell Them About Us* premiered at CPH:DOX 2024 and received the ECFA Award for Best European Feature Documentary for Young Audience at the 64th Zlín International Film Festival while her short animated documentary *Shadows* celebrated its world premiere at the 81st Venice International Film Festival.

PRODUCTION COMPANY PROFILE

Shaghab Films is a young production company with a critical viewpoint. We portray authentic and complex female stories and believe it's time to tell our narratives deliberately. Based in Amman-Jordan and founded by Rand Beiruty and Jude Kawwa, Shaghab Films is on the look-out for talents with a strong artistic vision and social commentary. Our focus is on international co-productions.

✉ randbeiruty@gmail.com

**WATCH THE
TEASER HERE**

FRANCESCA BERTIN • Director & Writer (Italy)

AL BAYT



DIRECTORS Laura Amna Stauth, Francesca Bertin

PRODUCERS Julia Cöllén, Karsten Krause, Frank Scheuffele (FÜNFERFILM)

LENGTH 90 min

COUNTRIES OF PRODUCTION Germany / Egypt

STAGE OF PRODUCTION Development

SYNOPSIS

The "Izba", a crumbling 1927 cotton estate in Egypt's Nile Delta, stands in stark isolation, detached from the nearby village and its rapidly urbanising surroundings. Once a symbol of global cotton wealth and hardship, the estate is now overtaken by egrets and foxes, while children play among its crumbling walls. Despite the ruin, a dedicated staff continues to clean and maintain the grounds, a quiet contrast to the surrounding decay. As the estate faces demolition, the film weaves together past and present voices, exploring the contrast between the haunting silence of the estate and the vibrancy of the changing rural landscape.

LOGLINE

On the verge of demolition, the ghosts of a former cotton estate in Egypt's Nile Delta reveal a haunting history, offering a poignant exploration of memory, loss, and the complexities of letting go.



BIOGRAPHY

Francesca Bertin, an Italian filmmaker based in Hamburg, holds an M.A. in Film from the Academy of Fine Arts in Hamburg and an M.A. in Law from the University of Trento. Her debut feature film, *Tara*, premiered at Visions du Réel in 2022.

PRODUCTION COMPANY PROFILE

FÜNFERFILM was founded in 2016 and has since gained international recognition for its distinctive auteur films and innovative cinematic approaches. Specialising in both fiction and documentary features, the company has showcased its work at prestigious film festivals worldwide, including Berlinale, Settimana della Critica, Locarno Film Festival, and International Film Festival Rotterdam. Our films have been successfully distributed in cinemas across Europe and the United States, as well as globally on platforms such as MUBI, Criterion Collection, and Filmin.

KOVAL BHATIA • Director & Producer (India)

SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW



DIRECTOR Koval Bhatia

PRODUCERS Koval Bhatia (A Little Anarky Films), Riham Ezzaldeen (What Took You So Long?)

LENGTH 70 min

COUNTRIES OF PRODUCTION India / France / USA

STAGE OF PRODUCTION Development

SYNOPSIS

At 29, Koval's life is a spectacular mess. Estranged from her abusive Punjabi family, she built a fragile independence in Delhi, only to lose a partner to mental illness and her own sanity. Like the heroes of her favourite sagas, she decides to go on an epic adventure to find her childhood father figure. She finds him in France, a grumpy hermit with his own baggage, and begins to realise that his lonely life and western philosophy are a far cry from the warmth, healing and community she seeks. Koval turns back home, disenchanted. When her younger brother announces his wedding to a man, she embraces a new quest: to break the lifelong silence and separation of their family, and confront the hypocrisy of modern Indian society.

LOGLINE

Koval, an Indian filmmaker travels across the world to find her childhood father figure, only to realise his life is no fairytale, and his western ideals don't work for her. Back home, a wedding invitation pulls her back into the Great Indian Family Drama, featuring mental illness and skeletons in the closet.



BIOGRAPHY

Koval is a filmmaker and producer based in India. She produced *Against The Tide*, a feature documentary that won the Special Jury Prize at Sundance Festival 2023 and was nominated for IDA and Gotham Awards. Her films have screened at Sundance, IDFA, Hot Docs, Visions du Reel and aired on global broadcasters including BBC, POV and FranceTV. She has received fellowships and grants from Eurodoc, Sundance, IDFA, IDA, Doc Society, Circle Women Doc Accelerator and many others. Koval is the founder of Open Door Docs and serves as the Program Director of the SSP Asia Fellowship by Video Consortium. She is a member of the Asia Pacific Screen Academy, Film Fatales and EWA.

PRODUCTION COMPANY PROFILE

A Little Anarky Films is an award-winning production company based in India, for over 14 years. A woman-led company, they produced *Against The Tide* by Sarvnik Kaur (Feature Doc, Sundance 2023), *She Run The World* (Short, Hot Docs '23), *Rehearsal For A Funeral* (WIP Feature fiction, Filmbazaar) with a strong slate of fiction and documentary projects in the works.

XIN FANG • Director (China)

LETTERS FROM HOME (WT)



DIRECTORS Xin Fang, Chenyu Kou

PRODUCERS Xin Fang, Nicole Tsien

WRITER Xin Fang

LENGTH 90 min

COUNTRIES OF PRODUCTION China / USA

STAGE OF PRODUCTION Late development/Early production

SYNOPSIS

After a decade in the United States, Xin returns to Shenzhen to tend to her aging grandparents after her parent's incarceration following missteps in their business expansion. Back in her hometown, transformed by the post-pandemic geopolitical landscape and facing much uncertainty, she begins to forge a new relationship with her father, this time as an adult.

LOGLINE

Letters From Home (wt.) chronicles three generations of a Chaoshan family that experience the rise and fall of the Chinese dream against a backdrop of hyper-development in Shenzhen, China's Silicon Valley.



BIOGRAPHY

Xin Fang is a Chinese artist and documentary filmmaker. Born and raised in Shenzhen, Xin came to the United States to continue her bachelor's degree in visual journalism and sociology at Boston University (2016). She graduated with the Paula Rhodes Memorial Award from the School of Visual Arts in documentary filmmaking (2019). She works as a freelance director and is directing her first feature-length documentary. She is a 2023 Points North Fellow and CIRCLE Women Doc Accelerator fellow in 2024.

PRODUCTION COMPANY PROFILE

Nicole Tsien is keen on uplifting BIPOC filmmakers and supporting creative documentaries. Her recent producing credit includes DocNYC Audience Award winner, *Slumlord Millionaire*. She has received multiple News and Documentary Emmys, and Peabody nominations and awards.

ÅSNE Ø. HØGETVEIT • Producer (Norway)

THE WARRIORS & THE SWAN (WT)



DIRECTOR Trude Berge Ottersen

PRODUCERS Trude Berge Ottersen, Åsne Ø. Høgetveit
(Koko Film)

LENGTH 90 min

COUNTRIES OF PRODUCTION Norway / Sweden

STAGE OF PRODUCTION Development

SYNOPSIS

Trude grew up in a peace nation, right next to a weapons factory. She had barely spoken to a soldier before she found herself on the ship Svanen (The Swan). A 100-year-old schooner that every summer gathers war veterans from all over Norway for a veteran voyage. They embark on a three-week journey along the Norwegian coast for companionship and recognition. *The Warriors & the Swan* is a road movie at sea that raises the question: Can we fight war with war, or is Norway a sinking peace nation?

LOGLINE

A curious pacifist filmmaker goes on a sailing trip with a bunch of war veterans, only to discover that the seeds of conflicts lie in all of us. *The Warriors & The Swan* is a road movie at sea, that raises the question: Can we fight war with war, or is Norway a sinking peace nation?



BIOGRAPHY

Åsne Høgetveit is a creative producer at Koko Film in Tromsø, Norway. As a producer, she brings with her a dedication for compelling storytelling, analytical abilities and an interest for societal issues. She is currently working on her first film projects, and has a background in academia and politics.

PRODUCTION COMPANY PROFILE

Koko Film AS, established in 2013 and based in Tromsø, in Northern Norway, is a dedicated documentary film production company. It specialises in producing original documentaries, encompassing both films and series, from initial concept through to final production. The all-women company works primarily with local filmmakers, but wishes to explore international opportunities too.

MINA KESHAVARZ • Director & Producer (Iran)

HOPE AGAINST HOPE



DIRECTOR Mina Keshavarz

PRODUCERS Mina Keshavarz (MinDoc Film Production), Christophe Bruncher (ICI ET LA PRODUCTIONS), Anita Norfolk (FOLK FILM)

LENGTH 100 min

COUNTRIES OF PRODUCTION Iran / France / Norway

STAGE OF PRODUCTION Late development/Early production

DETAILED INFORMATION AND TEASER AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

LOGLINE

Mina is 17 years old the first time she votes, and 37 years old the first time she is arrested in her apartment in Tehran. Spanning a quarter of a century, *Hope Against Hope* is the filmmaker's own story and an intimate look at how political and social conflicts shape us.



BIOGRAPHY

Mina Keshavarz (b. 1984) is an award-winning Iranian documentary filmmaker and producer. Her films explore social issues using personal narratives—including *Unwelcome in Tehran* (2012), *Profession: Documentarist* (2014), *Braving the Waves* (2016), *The Art of Living in Danger* (2020), and *Phobos* (2023)—and have premiered at CPH:DOX, IDFA, Thessaloniki, Busan International Film Festival, Sheffield, Tribeca, and London Film Festival. Among over ten international awards, *The Art of Living in Danger* was awarded Best Documentary Film at the Busan International Film Festival in 2020, and it was long-listed for the Academy Award for Best Feature Documentary in 2021. Mina is an alumnus of Berlinale Talents, HotDocs Emerging Docs Accelerator Lab, ESoDoc, and Tribeca Film Institute.

PRODUCTION COMPANY PROFILE

MinDoc Film Production founded in 2013 in Tehran by Mina Keshavarz, Iranian filmmaker and producer. Since then MinDoc Film Production produced three acclaimed documentary films *The Art of Living in Danger*, *Braving the Waves* and *Fish Eye*, interactive documentary films. Films produced by Mina Keshavarz supported by International Fund including IDFA Bertha Fund, SorFond, Fritt Ord, NRW, HotDocs International Documentary Fund. The films have been broadcasted on Arte, Aljazeera, RTS, ZDF.

FLORA LINGHWA HUANG • Director, Producer & Writer (Taiwan)

THE WHITE WATERS



DIRECTOR Flora Linghwa Huang

PRODUCER Yi-Shan Lo

CO-PRODUCER Weina Zhao

LENGTH 85 min

COUNTRIES OF PRODUCTION Taiwan / Austria

STAGE OF PRODUCTION Late Development

SYNOPSIS

Once gliding through Vietnam's cafés like a butterfly in bloom, an arranged marriage swept Hông to Taiwan at 29, grounded her in an isolated village with a working-class husband. Escaping urban chaos, Flora met Hông, who welcomed her like a daughter. Throughout the film, Flora questioned Hông's quiet acceptance of a life tied by men. Yet, their bond became a compass for Flora as she witnessed Hông bear labor and family demands while finding grace in life's smallest, most ordinary moments.

LOGLINE

Hông never wished to be a wife, yet an arranged marriage carried her far from Vietnam to a foreign abandoned village. For years, she endured, anchored in reluctant acceptance. Her bond with Flora connected them to explore the burdens of womanhood and seek to preserve the self within unwilling ties.



BIOGRAPHY

As an anthropologist and documentary filmmaker from Taiwan, Flora brings an East Asian perspective to stories of mobility, womanhood, and the unspoken truths of the body. Her curiosity about human connection and the power of relationships drives her films and led her to found Autumn Film Production. With a tender yet unflinching approach, Flora explores the complexity of women's experiences, delving into the evolving dynamics of vulnerability.

PRODUCTION COMPANY PROFILES

Autumn Film Production embodies a season rich in sentiment and complexity, reflecting our filmmaking vision of capturing humanity's tenderness, intimacy, and strength. We are dedicated to cultivating and producing documentaries highlighting women, marginalized groups, diasporas, immigrants, and political identities.

–

A production company RIPE is a part of Gewächshaus, a network from and for BPOC filmmakers in the German-speaking area. Gewächshaus aims to promote diversity both in front of and behind the camera, in order to bring BPOC stories into the mainstream. It is a place for community building, networking, empowerment, education, and discourse. Additionally, we offer consulting services for diversity storytelling.

✉ florahuang0212@gmail.com

**WATCH THE
TEASER HERE**

password: TWW202402

CLARA LÓPEZ RUBIO • Director & Producer (Spain)

AMAZONAS



DIRECTOR Clara López Rubio

PRODUCER Laura Dauden (Forward Films)

MINORITARIAN CO-PRODUCER Isabela Parra, Caleidoscopio Cine

LENGTH 90 min

COUNTRIES OF PRODUCTION Spain / Ecuador

STAGE OF PRODUCTION Late development

SYNOPSIS

The construction of a road in the middle of the Ecuadorian jungle has divided the Waorani women: those who are against the road and those who are for it. The film's director, hailing from Europe, arrives in the territory at the same time as the road does. Although she is a "Cowore", a non-Waorani, a foreigner, the women agree to make a film with her. Over the course of two years, Amazonas documents the changes to the territory, its vital natural resources and its community provoked by the presence of the road.

LOGLINE

The Amazonian Grandmothers Nanci and Huanginkamu join forces to reunite the divided Waorani community torn over the construction of a jungle road, inspired by their mother Dayuma's legacy.



BIOGRAPHY

After studying at the German Film and Television Academy in Berlin (dffb), Clara López Rubio closely followed the Assange case for nine years and wrote and directed the documentary *Hacking Justice* (2021) which has been broadcasted on several European public television stations. López Rubio is a Documentary Campus, Doklab Navarra, CIMA Mentoring 1 & 1 and CIRCLE Women Doc Accelerator alumna. She has presented her projects in international platforms and has received grants from ICAA, DAMA Proyecta (Spain), Berliner Projektfonds and NRW Filmstiftung.

PRODUCTION COMPANY PROFILE

Forward Films is a documentary production company dedicated to human rights issues, known for bold approaches and impactful outcomes. Since 2012, it has produced projects in over 15 territories, primarily in Latin America. Its films have been featured at renowned festivals, including Santa Barbara and São Paulo. Its latest film, *The Hosts*, premiered at Santa Barbara and became a top documentary on GloboPlay.

**WATCH THE
TEASER HERE**

✉ clopezrubio@aol.com • laura.dauden@forward-films.com

password: AmazonasTeaser

FAGAMOU FAMA NDIAYE • Director (Senegal)

MATY OR THE REAL LIFE



DIRECTOR Fagamou Fama Ndiaye

PRODUCER Marie Ka (Picture Box)

CO-PRODUCER Weina Zhao

LENGTH —

COUNTRY OF PRODUCTION Senegal

STAGE OF PRODUCTION Development

SYNOPSIS

As Mrs. Cardozo, Maty leaves the lively nightlife and social buzz for the responsibilities of married life, focusing solely on caring for her much older but new husband Zakaria and nurturing their long distance relationship. But her dreams to join him run into trouble when she learns that Zakaria can't bring her to France as his legal wife, despite his promises. This revelation shakes Maty to her core. Stuck in her small room in Dakar, she feels her future with Zakaria slipping through her fingers. Through long video calls, Maty gets to know her husband and starts to see that their relationship is not the fairytale she imagined for herself.

LOGLINE

Maty, a former bartender from Dakar, struggles to balance her lively, carefree personality with the image of a respectable married woman, slowly losing herself in a relationship shaped by strict morals and heavy social expectations.



BIOGRAPHY

I discovered my passion for cinema through distribution. I left my career as an engineer in France and returned to Senegal. This led me to co-create the Yennenga Center, a post-production hub initiated by Alain Gomis. Today, I focus on bringing to life the stories I wished I had heard while growing up in Senegal and developing several documentary projects.

PRODUCTION COMPANY PROFILES

Picture Box is a Senegalese production company founded by Marie Ka in 2005, whose works have been showcased on large and small screens on four continents. In 2013, the company took a hiatus as its founder moved to Canada with the ambition of expanding her outlets and existing in several spaces and markets. Ten years later, Picture Box is back in business, building on the experience of its founder and putting female representation and women's stories at the heart of its priorities.

INES TANOVIC • Director, Writer & Producer (Bosnia & Herzegovina)

THE LETTER TO MY CHILDREN



DIRECTOR Ines Tanovic

PRODUCERS Ines Tanovic, Alem Babic

LENGTH 90 min

COUNTRIES OF PRODUCTION Bosnia and Herzegovina / Germany

STAGE OF PRODUCTION Development

SYNOPSIS

For her birthday, Ines receives a DNA ancestry test from her daughter, Hana. The family's long-held belief that Ines inherited her rationality from her German mother and her emotionality from her Bosnian father is seemingly confirmed by the test results, which reveal that she is 70% Northeast European. Hana, who is studying genetics, thought the test would make a thoughtful gift. However, it sparks a family discussion about identity, as the scientific evidence sheds light on Ines's lifelong sense of disconnection—feeling out of place within her family, her city, and the society where she lives. Despite this, Ines never wanted to leave Sarajevo, not even during the Bosnian War.

LOGLINE

By delving into the stories of her German mother and Bosniak father, both prominent filmmakers, the director explores the impact of their cultures on her life and the legacy that shaped her children's upbringing.



BIOGRAPHY

Born in Sarajevo. Director, writer and producer. Founder of the production company Dokument in 1991. Author of outstanding, award-winning short documentaries. She directed short feature films and many TV shows. She was a participant in the Berlinale Talent Campus and Berlin Today Award. She directed the Bosnian part of the long feature omnibus *Some Other Stories* in 2010. In 2015 she finished her feature film *Our Everyday Life* and in 2019 the feature film *The Son*. Both films were the Bosnian Oscar-nominees and were invited to over 40 festivals, winning numerous awards.

PRODUCTION COMPANY PROFILE

DOKUMENT Sarajevo, was founded in 1991. In over 30 years of work, DOKUMENT has produced many documentaries, shorts and feature films such as *The Son* (2019), *Our Everyday Life* (2015), *Some Other Stories* (2009). Each of these films was an international co-production with the support of EURIMAGES and the MEDIA program. In 2024, a documentary film *Letter to my Children* and a feature film *The Way Home* are in pre-production.

CIRCLE WOMEN DOC ACCELERATOR 2025

MENTORS

Brigid O'Shea • Director of DAE (Germany)
Diana El Jeiroudi • Director, Writer & Producer (Syria, Germany)
Joanna Solecka • Film Marketing & Audience Design Strategist (Poland)
Dana Bunescu • Filmmaker, Editor & Sound Designer (Romania)
Yael Bitton • Editor (Switzerland)
Anna Lisa Putorti • Entertainment Lawyer (Italy)
Rebecca Day • Producer & Psychotherapist (UK)
Charline Branger • Trailer Editor (France)
Lana Bastašić • Writer (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
Heidi Fleischer • Producer (USA)
Kumjana Novakova • Curator & Director (North Macedonia)
Mara Gourd-Mercado • Head of Industry CPH:DOX (Denmark, Argentina/Canada)
Alyx Ayn Arumpac • Director & Producer (Philippines)
Lin Alunna • Director (Denmark)

ADVISORY BOARD

Brigid O'Shea • Co-director of DAE (Germany)
Joanna Solecka • Film Marketing & Audience Design Strategist (Poland)
Ana Lisa Putorti • Entertainment lawyer (Italy)

TEAM

Biljana Tutorov • Program Director
Bojan Schuch • Financial Manager
Anne Rethfeldt • Project Coordinator Module 1
Letícia da Rosa • Project Coordinator Module 2
Luka Venturin • Program Producer Module 1
Tamara Komazec • Program Producer Module 2
Thaís Omine • Project Assistant & Social Media
Anja Koprivšek • Project Assistant
Virginia Eronico • Project Assistant Module 1
Altinai Petrovich Njekoš • Graphic Design
Abraham Zeitoun • Graphic Design Final Booklet
Branislav Bogojević • Accountant

ORGANIZED BY

Wake Up Films (Serbia)

PARTNERS

When East Meets West • Cannes Docs / Marché du Film • IEFTA
International Emerging Film Talent Association • DAE Documentary
Association of Europe • IDA - International Documentary Association
• Thessaloniki Documentary Festival - Agora Docs • Film Center
of Montenegro • EWA European Women's Audiovisual Network •
CINEUROPA • EFM - European Film Market • Kulturni Centar Novi Sad
• EURODOC • DOK Leipzig • Film in Mind • Festival Scope Pro •
Marijana Harder - Film and Media PR and Marketing

©Åsne Ø. Høgetveit

CIRCLE Fiction Orbit 2025

Herceg Novi, Montenegro
November, 23 - 30, 2025

NEW call opens in May 2025

Find us

 doccircle.me

 [@circle.accelerator](https://www.facebook.com/circle.accelerator)

 [@circleaccelerator](https://www.instagram.com/circleaccelerator)

SPECIAL THANKS

Alessandro Gropplero • Head of WEMW Co-production forum

Angeliki Vergou • Head of Agora Docs TIFF

Outlook Film Sales

Babette Dieu • Consultant

Bethany Wearden • IDA Fiscal Sponsorship Manager

Emile Hertling Péronard • Producer at Ánorâk Film

Francine Raveney • EWA

Graziela Bildesheim • EWA

Hotel Leopold • Novi Sad

Jelena Mišeljčić • Producer & professor at Faculty of Dramatic Art, Montenegro

Kesmat Elsayed • Producer at SEERA FILMS

Lianne Llewellyn • Director of the Global Film Expression Initiative and IEFTA Partnerships

Marija Zidar • Documentary Filmmaker & Researcher

Marion Schmidt • Co-founder of DAE

Maša Nešković • Film director and Intimacy Coordination Graduate

Nadja Tennstedt • Head of DOK Industry Programme

Nora Philippe • Head of EURODOC & documentary filmmaker

Patrizia Mancini • Sheffield DocFest - Head of Industry

Pierre-Alexis Chevit • Head of Cannes Docs / Marché du Film

Quentin Laurent • Producer at Les Films de l'oeil sauvage

Rok Biček • Writer, director, producer at Cvinger Film

Selin Murat • IDFA Market Manager

Suzy Gillett • Script & Edit Consultant

Thanos Stavropoulos • International Program Associate, Agora Docs TIFF

Vladan Petković • Senior writer at Cineuropa, film critic & festival programmer

Wouter Jansen • Sales Agent at Square Eyes

Co-funded by
the European Union



Under the patronage of

