

Production Notes

## MARS AT SUNRISE



A FILM BY JESSICA HABIE

PRODUCED BY EYES INFINITE FILMS AND MAJDAL FILMS

[www.MARSATSUNRISE.COM](http://www.MARSATSUNRISE.COM)

OPENING IN NYC ON FEBRUARY 7, 2014 AT THE QUAD CINEMA

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## SYNOPSIS

**Mars at Sunrise** tells the story of a war waged on imagination. The film abstractly portrays the conflict between artists on either side of Israel's militarized borders, and explores how a powerful creative mind survives, and even thrives, under pressure.

When Azzadeh, a young Jewish American poet, travels to Israel to see the land and people she has only ever heard about through the voices of others she uncovers stories of Israeli soldiers who reflect on the complexity of their military service; Palestinian families who are displaced and wedged between walls; and artists from both cultures who strive to paint a picture of life surrounded by conflict.

While waiting at a checkpoint in Jenin, Azzadeh meets Khaled, a Palestinian painter forced from his home in East Jerusalem. Azzadeh accepts a ride from the handsome stranger, whose life story she soon bears witness to as the two come face to face with Eyal, the young officer who once interrogated Khaled, at the next checkpoint.

Khaled tells Azzadeh the story of his arrest and torture when he refused to collaborate with Israeli Intelligence. Under the duress of solitary confinement, Khaled must use the muscles of his creative imagination to remain free despite the imprisonment of his physical being.

As he struggles, Khaled awakens a wave of jealousy, creativity and chaos in Eyal, himself a frustrated artist. But through this painter's resistance, courage and spirit, we learn that an artist can never be imprisoned.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

**Mars at Sunrise** is a film that was inspired by the life of Hani Zurob.

I met Hani years ago while making my film **Meet Me Out of the Siege**. He spoke to me about the torture he endured. He described the perverse relationship between himself and his jailor. Hani's interrogator asked him to collaborate with Israeli Intelligence and disclose which artists in Ramallah had connections to the various "terrorist" organizations. The officer asked Hani to sketch his portrait, and when Hani refused to sign the sketch, his hands all the time bound with plastic handcuffs, the officer broke the hand he believed was the artist's drawing hand. I began to ask myself what interest did this military man have in a painter? I became very curious about the inner world of these two men. Could it be that within the interrogator lay a deep creativity akin that within Hani?

When the screenplay was finally finished I sent Hani the text. We shared great trust, affection and friendship between us. I told him I would not make a film that was harmful to Palestine in anyway. I promised I would not simplify his story and juxtapose it unfairly against the pain of his jailor, or make another problematic stereotypical film about the occupation. But these are just words. When he read the script, he saw that the interrogator in my film was an artist like himself, and he felt this pushed the limit too far. Could I dare to imagine that the man who tortured him was an artist? We had planned to use his paintings in the film as the body of work for the character of Khaled. He said we could not use them.

Eventually I accepted the reality that I might never please my friend. I understood that it would be nearly impossible to make a film about a torture victim's experience that the victim would not feel deceived by. The film became a rich tapestry of hundreds of people's testimonies, filtered through the witness of my imagination. Mars at Sunrise developed a truly universal language, even as many of the scenes remained written word for word from Hani's original testimony.

I recently traveled to Paris to visit Hani. I prepared myself for what could be one of the hardest days of my life. I told myself, when he says "I never want to see this film again" or "you have betrayed me" I would have to be strong and understand it's bigger than him or me now. There are great truths in this film and I know it's a powerful work made by many talented, dedicated people. But I was scared.

We were alone when we watched the film. His eight-month pregnant wife was stuck in Jerusalem, fighting the bureaucracy of the occupation. She was unable to leave the country without losing her Jerusalem ID and the right to live in the home where she was born, because she had been living in Paris for the last years. Nevertheless, she needed to leave immediately to deliver the child on French soil so her otherwise stateless Gazan child could have a chance at a French passport. Hani was deep in the thick net of the occupation, although we sat in a small painting studio in Paris.

I trembled with nerves, drinking the tiny cup of strong Arabic coffee in front of me. As the credit sequence appeared on the screen I knew he would soon turn and look me in the eyes. I held my breath until he said "Mabrouk" and a smile spread wide across his face. A soft smile, a reflective smile. A genuine smile full of stirred up memories. Congratulations he said again, and I released tension in my body that I had been holding for five years.

Hani said that it was difficult that in many ways Khaled and Eyal's stories parallel, but ultimately he felt the work was strong, sophisticated and intelligent. From his point of view, Khaled's character is the one that allows Eyal to look into the mirror and see for himself who he has become. In that moment I felt deep gratitude to all who have trusted me with their stories, and a great hope that we will transcend the many walls we have built between us on Earth, one story at a time.

## FILMMAKERS

Directed by **Jessica Habie**

**Mars at Sunrise** is Jessica Habie's first Feature Film. Her documentary works "*Beyond Blue and Gray*" and "*Art and Apathy*" received awards at several film festivals including Tribeca Film Festival, The Cannes Short Film Corner, and the Berlinale Talent Campus.

Jessica Habie is a director, NYU Tisch graduate and founder of Eyes Infinite Films. In 2003, she released "Another World is Happening and The Art of Love and Struggle". The 2008 Tribeca Film Festival awarded Jessica with the Best Documentary Short award for "Mandatory Service", which shows "the perspective of war and conflict from the participants themselves."

With her documentary projects "Art and Apathy" and "Beyond Blue and Gray", produced with her creative partner Nirah Shirazipour, Eyes Infinite Films was awarded prizes at the Cannes Short Film Corner, the Berlinale Talent Campus, and the Moondance Film Festival. The films screened at several film festivals, universities, and community centers around the world helping to shine light on a few of the many untold narratives from the Israeli Palestinian Conflict.

In 2009 Jessica began writing her first narrative film, **Mars at Sunrise**, which was produced in Nazareth in 2011. The film stars golden globe winning actor Ali Suliman and introduces Guy El Hanan. The film also features original poetry by Haale Gafori and a soundtrack in six languages (English, Hebrew, Russian, Yiddish, Farsi and Arabic) produced by Tamir Muskat of the Balkan Beat Box, and featuring original music by Itamar Ziegler and Mohsen Subhi.

The film is set for limited theatrical and wide digital distribution in February of 2014. Proceeds for the film will go to the newly created Fajr Palestine Film Fund and will support the production of experimental and otherwise genre defiant works of cinema from the Palestinian Diaspora.

Produced by **Baher Agbariya**

*Thirst (Attash)* 2004, *Last Days in Jerusalem* (2011), *Man Without a Cell Phone* (2010)

Produced by **Nirah Shirazipour**

Founder of Eyes Infinite Films

Edited by **Luis Carballar**

*Amores Perros* (2000), *Manorca* (2008), *Sin Nombre* (2009), *The Devil's Double* (2011), *Immigrant* (2012)

Edited by **ErezOs**

Cinematography by **Xavier J. Cunilleras**

Sound Design by **Martin Herndandez**

*Amores Perros* (2000), *Babel* (2006) *Into the Wild* (2007), *The Loneliest Planet* (2011), *On the Road* (2012)

Soundtrack by **Tamir Muskat** of the *Balkan Beat Box*, featuring original music by Itamar Ziegler and Mohsen Subhi

## CAST

**Ali Suliman** as Khaled

*Paradise Now* (Golden Globe Winner for Best Foreign Film 2005), *The Lemon Tree* (2008), *Pomegranates and Myrrh* (2008), *The Attack* (2012)

**Guy El Hanan** as Eyal

Guy is a recent graduate of the *Jaque Le Coq* acting school in Paris France, an Israeli radio personality and an accomplished playwright.

**Haale Gafari** as Azzadeh

Haale is a musician from Brooklyn New York and the author of the original poetry featured in *Mars At Sunrise*.

**Mars at Sunrise** is inspired by the life of Palestinian artist Hani Zurob.

**Hani Zurob** is a Palestinian artist, born in 1976 in Rafah camp (Gaza). In 1994 he moved to Nablus, where he graduated in 1999 as a B.A. of Fine Arts at the University Al-Najah. He settled then in Ramallah until 2006, where he received a grant that allowed him to reside in Paris at the Cité Internationale des Arts. Hani was unable to return to his homeland. Today he lives in France, creating works that explore state of exile, waiting, movement and displacement - his work presents Palestine through a personal perspective and conceptual context that transcends borders and geography - concepts that remain close to the Painter's heart.

Hani was listed by The Huffington Post as one of ten 'international artists to watch' in 2013.

## THE EVOLUTION OF MARS AT SUNRISE

After making my documentaries **Art and Apathy** and **Beyond Blue and Gray** I was left feeling my work in the region was not complete. I was especially interested in the testimony of a Palestinian man named Wajee Tameise. He shared with me a story in which he found himself waiting at an Israeli checkpoint for a young soldier to wake up. This soldier had fallen asleep on duty. His slumber blocked the path of mothers, grandmothers, children, businessmen and students alike. When the soldier suddenly awoke he motioned with his foot to open the checkpoint.

This image, with its problematic poetry, illuminates the day to day relations between Israelis and Palestinians, and shows how un-natural and even perverted “non-violent” interactions between the two groups have become. I wanted to expose the beautifully tragic humanity expressed in this simple, yet cruel image of a sleeping soldier. I did not feel the documentary medium offered me the language I needed to turn these impressions into something meaningful and innovative. I needed a more subtle language.

I knew that if I set out to make a film that explained my thoughts in a linear, literal way my film, like many attempted in the region, would drown in a world of clichés and righteous indignation. I put together an hour of documentary material that I thought was provocative and assembled a group of musicians, asking them to respond creatively to the documentary. This resulted in a powerful collaboration with world-renowned producer Tamir Muskat of the **Balkan Beat Box**. Together we built a recording studio in the desert near Gaza and invited musicians from Tel Aviv, Ramallah and Iran (via Sweden) to create a soundtrack in English, Farsi, Hebrew, Yiddish and Russian. From the original music, I wrote the narrative of **Mars at Sunrise**. The relationship between the two main characters, Eyal and Khaled, was born from the guitar and oud performances of Mohsen Subhi (Ramallah) and Itamar Zeigler (Tel Aviv).

## PRODUCTION CREDITS

ALI SULIMAN as Khaled

GUY ELHANAN as Eyal

HALLE GAFORI as Azzadeh

MAISAM MASSRI as Jibirl

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY

JESSICA HABIE

AN EYES INFINITE FILM BY

JESSICA HABIE AND NIRAH SHIRAZIPOUR

PRODUCED BY

BAHER AGBARIYA

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

XAVIER J. CUNILLERAS

EDITED BY

LUIS CARBALLAR

ErezOs

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

NAEL KANJ

SUPERVISING SOUND EDITOR/SOUND DESIGNER

MARTIN HERNANDEZ (M.P.S.E)

ORIGINAL MUSIC

TAMIR MUSKAT

SOUNDTRACK

TAMIR MUSKAT

ITAMAR ZIEGLER

MOHSEN SUBHI

Production Supervisor

EIAS SULMAN

Location Manager

JAMAL KHALAILEH

Production Sound

RJA DBYEH

Re Recording Mixer

JAIME BAKSHT

Costume Designer

NARDEEN SRUJI

1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Director

ENAS MUTHAFFAR

Production Manager

OLA KUDHA

Hair and Makeup Artist

SIGALIT GRAU

Written in Collaboration with

AMER HLEHEL

HALLE GAFORI

GUY ELHANAN

ALI SULIMAN

NIRAH SHIRAZIPOUR



## Cast

Teacher Enas	RAND ABOUD
Mahmoud	AMMER HLEIHL
Adila	ZUHAIRA SABBAG
Husni	TAREQ QUBTI
Nurse	RACHEL SLATER
Sara	LAURA HAWA
Doctor and Dancer	DANYA ELRAZ
Green Soldier Lady	NETTA MOST
Muhamad	BAHER AGBARIYA
Sama	ADAN DAHER
Lubna	WARDE DAHER
Sami	ALEX BAKRI
Shakespeare Actor	YOUSSEF SWEID
Darwish Actor	SHREIDI JABAREEN
Palestinian policeman	MMDOOH AGBARIYA
Jibril Past life	MAHMUD ABU JAZI
Jibirl Voice One	HUSAIN MAHAJNEH
Jibril Voice Two	NAEL KANJ
Bakery owner	NAEL KANJ
Cement Worker	MARWAN OKAL
Woman with explosive belt	ROZEEN BISHARAT
Violin Player	MEIRAV KUPPERBERG
Kissing woman	ORIEL LEVI
Kissing woman	TAMI BARRAK
Friend on Answering machine	RJA DBYEH
Yalla Picasso Solider	GILAED LESHEM
Yossi	DAN VARDI
Crying Solider	YANIV BITON
Solider who gets hit	KOBI ALZARKI
Aggressive solider	AEDO BNMOHA
Camouflage solider	ERAN GARNI
Skull solider	YOSI MALKA
Solider who fights Eyal	NIR HASSAN

Young boy with gun	YOSEF SALEEM
Young boy in Classroom	MAMOON MUNTHER
Angel Baby in Hallway	MARIAM KANJ
Male Nurse	MHMOUD ADEEB
Woman pushing body	TITYANNA
Bloody Man	JAMAL KHALAILEH
Frequency Designer	NIRAH SHIRAZIPOUR
Set Dresser	SAMIR HAWA
	LEILA MUAMMAR
Props Master	ANET BARTONICSEK
Art Assistants	JAMIE DENBURG HABIE
	ASSAF ASFURI
	DAHOOD ABU SINI
	WASEEM NWAIESER
	ALI ALAL
	SHADDI
Original Paintings	SUHEL ABU NOWARA
	AHMAD KANAAN
	ASSAD EZI
Artistic Coach	JABER ISSA
Title and Credit Design	DELPHINE PASSOT
	ARNAUD ZEIN EL DIN, DEAR STUDIOS
Costume Assistant	LNA ABU KHADRAH
	JAMIE DENBURG HABIE
Post Production Supervisor	DIEGO ROS
Sound Designer/FX Editor	ALEJANDRO QUEVEDO
Foley/Sound FX Editor	GOEUN LEE
Dialogue Editor	OMAR BLANCO
Assistant Sound Editor	MALUZ OROZCO
Additional Sound Editing	ROLAND THAI (M.P.S.E)
Recordist/Assistant Mixer	MICHELLE COUTTOLENC
Re Recording Facility	ASTRO LX
Production/Extras Coordinator	MMDOOH AGBARIYA

Second Assistant Director	FIRAS KHORY
Casting	LAILA MUAMMAR
Accountant	MOHAMMAD AGBARIA
Dialect Coach	MAHA ASSAL
Focus Puller	FERNANDO GAYESKY
Second Camera Assistant	GEORGE DABAS
Third Camera Assistant	NADIM HAMED
Crane Operator	BHAA TURAANI
Key Gaffer	YANNA MITNICK
Best Boy Gaffer	DAFNA ENGLANDER
Electrician	GIDEON ALBERT
	AVI HAJAJ
Key Grip	MURDI BOAAZ
Best Boy Grip	JAKIE BOAAZ
Boom Operator	IBRAHEEM ZAHER
Camp Manager	MOHAMMAD ABU HUSSIEN
Third Assistant Director	ODED ADOMI LESHEM
Production Assistants	MOHAMMAD ZAKI
	AMER ISIEED
	SALAM SAEED
	WALEED SAEED
Production Driver	MNSOUR SAMMARA
Water Girl	AMANI BASIUNI
Personal Assistant to the Director	REEM ALHAJ
Translation	MAHA ASSAL
	REEM ELHAJ
	KHALED OMRAN
	REEM MAKHOUL
	LAILA MUAMMAR
	ADELE LEVIN
	MOHAMMAD ISHMAIL
Subtitles	PALOMA LOPEZ
	LAILA MUAMMAR

Tzeelim Soundtrack	TAMIR MUSKAT ITAMAR ZIEGLER MOHSEN SUBHI NOAM INBAR EYAL TALMUDI TOMER YOSEF BEHRANG MIRI
Additional Shooting Line Producer	LAURA HAWA
Production Assistant	NEAMI SHALABI MUSA NWAIESER
Key Grip	DANIEL KALUTSKY
Grip Assistant	NIR HARARI AMEERAM
Electrician	SHIMAON BALFAFR SHAI GAGO SHLOMO KUPER
Still Photographer	JAMIE DENBURG HABIE
Security	REZEQ
Extras Agenc	BAMAROUM HAIFA
Camera Equipment	YALLOW DAWN - NAZARETH LIGHT EQUIPMENT: F.T.S
Grip Equipment	MURDI BOAAZ
Post Production Nazareth	EIAS SULMAN STUDIO
Post Production Tel Aviv	EDIT STUDIOS
Post Production Los Angeles	JUAN CARLOS AGUIRRE, HTV STUDIOS
Camp Equipment	SAMIR HAWA
Light Truck	OSCAR_MIKI ALFASI
Weapons	PINI KAVALEIR
Hotels	ALAEN NAZARETH 7ARCHES JERUSALEM
Travel Agency	SUHER ABU ALASSAL
Printing House	BASHAR HORANY
Car Rental	SALIM ASFUR
Construction Materials	ARABIEH TAHA

Catering	AZIZ SALEM BAYAT RESTURANT
Walkie Talkies	MILLENNIUM
Transportation	AHMAD ZUABI TAXI'S
Insurance	NOAA BAR YOSEF
Legal Services	AMMAR AGBARIYA
Locations	OLD MUNICIPALITY NAZARETH –SARAYA EIAS SULMAN HOUSE SUHEL ABU NWARAH HOUSE DEAD SEA NAZARETH SCHOOL
Online Facility	OXIDO STUDIOS MEXICO CITY
Executive Producers DI	MARCO RODRÍGUEZ FARAH GÁMEZ
Colorist	FERNANDO MEDELLÍN
Assistant Colorist	ISAAC MOLINA
Data Wrangler	EDUARDO CECCALDI
DCI	ISAAC MOLINA
Visual Effects	VICENTE RODRÍGUEZ RODRIGO DE GANTE TÉLLEZ
ADR studio Tel Aviv	D.B STUDIO_AAMI ZOFARI
ADR Studio Los Angeles	P.O.P STUDIOS
ADR Studio Nazarath	AWTAR ARTS STUDIO
Post Sound Studio Los Angeles	DIGITAL DIFFERENCE L

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ADELE LEVINE  
MOHAMMAD ISSA ISHMAIL  
TAMIR MUSKAT  
ITAMAR ZIEGLER  
TOMER YOSEF  
HAMOODI SHEHADE  
REEM MAHOUL  
SAID ABBASS  
AI HAQ  
DAOUD NASSER  
THE FREEDOM THEATRE  
YEHUDA SHAUL  
RAMI ELHANAN  
ELIK ELHANAN  
GILA SVIRSKY  
NOAM ENBAR  
BENNY ELDER  
ORLY MANOR  
NETTA PLOTSKY  
KEVIN HEARST  
ROY ETTINGER  
ABED RABBAH  
MAHYAD TOUSI  
KAMAL BOULLATTA  
NAJWAN DARWISH  
EFFI COHEN  
AMY GREENLEE  
KAREM TANNOUS  
MATT KILMER  
FRAN QUINN

THE DEAD SEA

Written by Halle Gafari

Recited by Halle Gafari

IRTIJAL

Music by Mohsen Subhi

© Mawasem 2006

SNAPSHOTS OF JERUSALEM

Written by Halle Gafari

Excerpts recited by Halle Gafari

AL BAH

Music and Words by Al Sheik Iman

"AL ZOT"

Nathan Alterman

NAFETHA

Music by Mohsen Subhi

© Mawasem 2006

KING RICHARD THE SECOND

Written by William Shakespeare

HIWAR

Music by Tamir Muskat

© Tamir Muskat 2007

AHUVATI

Music by Itamar Ziegler Words by Tomer Yosef

Performed by Itamar Ziegler

© Tamir Muskat Itamar Ziegler 2007

THE STORY MUST BE TOLD

Music and Words by Itamar Ziegler

Performed by Itamar Ziegler

© Itamar Music 2010

BILA EWAN

Music by Mohsen Subhi © Mawasem 2006

VIOLIN WITHOUT A BOW

Victor Hernandez Stumphanuser © 2012

HEWAR

Music by Mohsen Subhi © Mawasem 2006

THREE

Music by Mohsen Subhi, Silence @2010

THE MOON SONG

Composed by Halle Gafari

Performed by Halle Gafari

Darya Publishing/BMI

LUBAVICH RAIDEL

Music by Tamir Muskat performed by Noam Inbar

© Tamir Muskat 2007

## MARS AT SUNRISE

## Production Notes

### GRACIAS A LA VIDA

Words by Violetta Parra

Performed by Halle Gafari

### FIN DER SHTIB

Music by Tamir Muskat performed by Noam

Inbar ©Tamir Muskat 2007

### ZIKRAYAT

Music by Mohsen Subhi © Mawasem 2006

### BLACK EYED SUZAN

Music by SHOTNEZ

Courtesy of JDubs Music INC 2011

### ZIKRAYAT

Music by Tamir Muskat and Mohsen Subhi

© Tamir Muskat 2007

### REHILE

Music by Tamir Muskat

©Tamir Muskat 2007

### SADNESS

Music and Words by Itamar Ziegler

Performed by Itamar Ziegler

© Itamar Music 2005

### AMOR FATI

Music by Itamar Zeigler and Yuli Beeri

Words by Itamar Ziegler

Performed by Itamar Ziegler

© Itamar Music 2010

### WORLDS

Music by Tamir Muskat

© Tamir Muskat 2007

### DEAR JOHN

Music by SHOTNEZ

Courtesy of JDubs Music INC 2011

### RED ID

Victor Hernandez Stumphanuser 2012

### I BLU

Music by Itamar Zeigler

Performed by Itamar Ziegler

© Itamar Music 2010

### DEVILISH

Music by Itamar Ziegler

© Itamar Music 2010



Producers

BAHER AGBARIYA

JESSICA HABIE

NIRAH SHIRAZIPOUR

Dedicated with Love and Light to

LISSIE HABIE

JULIANO MEIR KHAMIS

MOHSEN SUBHI

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