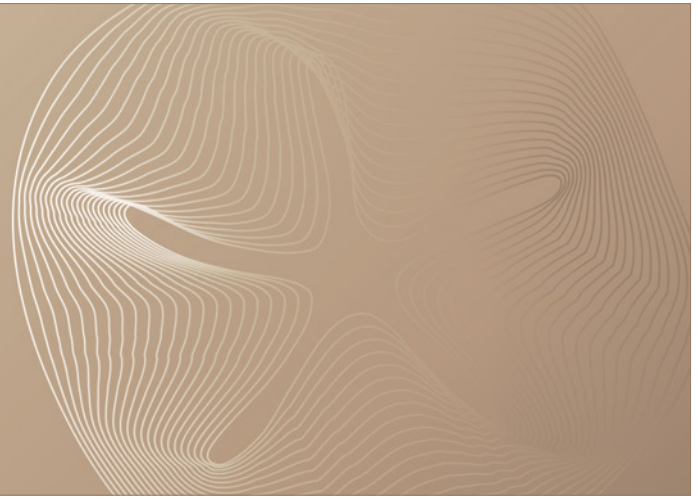


ELGOUNA  
FILM FESTIVAL  
1ST EDITION  
مهرجان الجونة السينمائي



# EL GOUNA STAR



**BORIS MITIC:  
FACTUAL ABSTRACT**



**Press Office Manager**

Khaled Mahmoud

**Bulletin Chief Editor**

Hani Mustafa

**Reporters & writers**

Najet Belhatem

Nahed Nasr

Yasmine Zohdi

Mohamed Fahmi

Mohamed El-Hajj

Sherif Abdel-Hadi

**Design & Layout**

Ahmed Atef Megahed

Ahmed Nagdy Abou

Zeid

El Haythem Said

Younes

	Marina Theater	Audimax (TU Berlin)	Sea Cinema 1	Sea Cinema 2	Sea Cinema 3
11 AM				11:00 AM 78 / 52 91 min R :18+	
12 PM			11:15 PM FIRST THEY KILLED MY FATHER: A DAUGHTER OF CAMBODIA REMEMBERS 135 min		
1 PM					
2 PM					
3 PM			2:45 PM Corporate 95 min	3:00 PM Mrs Fang 86 min	
4 PM					3:30 PM 17 73 min
5 PM					
6 PM		5:45 PM Volubilis 106 min	5:30 PM Redoubtable 107 min R: 18+		
7 PM	6:45 PM Submergence 112 min			6:15 PM Scary Mother 107 min	6:30 PM Rue De La Victoire 65 min R: 16+
8 PM					
9 PM			8:45 PM Wonders of The Sea (3D) 82 min		
10 PM	9:30 PM The Square 142 min R: 18+	9:15 PM The Third Murder 124 min		9:15 PM Zama 94 min R :18+	9:00 pm Of Sheep and Men 78 min
11 PM					
12 AM					



- OPENING & CLOSING FILMS
- FEATURE NARRATIVE COMPETITION
- FEATURE DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION
- SHORT FILMS COMPETITION
- OFFICIAL SELECTION OUT OF COMPETITION
- SPECIAL PRESENTATION

**Today**



Press Conference with **Forest Whitaker**  
 Attended by The Festival Founder  
**Eng. Naguib Sawiris**  
 2:00 PM at AudiMax

**Tomorrow**

Master Class by the American Filmmaker  
**Oliver Stone - 10:30 AM** at AudiMax

**PANEL DISCUSSIONS**

**Arab Cinema in the World: Tracing the Festival Circuit**  
 Thursday, 28th of September, 12:00pm  
**Refugee Crisis: Social Impact through Films**  
 Thursday, 28th of September, 10:30am  
 This panel discussion is presented in partnership with UNHCR.

**CINEGOUNA SPRINGBOARD AWARD CEREMONY**

**CineGouna Springboard Award Ceremony**  
 Thursday, 28th of September, 3:30pm



# ORDINARY PEOPLE IN CRUCIAL SITUATIONS



A Gentle Night

This GFF edition's Short Films Competition is comprised of a lineup of films with social themes, tackling concepts of loneliness, motherhood, disability, senility and childhood.

One of these films is *A Gentle Night* by Chinese filmmaker Qiu Yang, who won the short film Palme d'Or in this year's Cannes Film Festival. The film takes place entirely at night, where we see a mother in a nameless city searching for her teenage daughter who didn't come home after school. Throughout her journey through the city's streets, which starts at the police station, the woman is solitary and grappling with an inherent sense of guilt, in spite of the festive atmosphere surrounding her as everyone else celebrates the New Year. In the film, Yang relies on amateur performers. "Based on the actors' looks and personalities I decide which character suits them best. Somehow the character inhabits them rather than the other way around," he says, describing his practice. *A Gentle Night* is based on a true story of disappearance. "I always draw stories from things that happen around me, and I believe that reality is more intriguing than anything one can imagine, especially in a complicated place like China."

In *Cheers to the Newlyweds* by Mexican director Violeta Monserrat Larqué, a few scenes go by before the film reveals its core. Here, too, an ordinary elderly woman is moving around her house where cares for her overweight husband, and her discontent with her long marriage is clearly evident in her actions. Two separate events break the dullness of her daily routine: Her daughter's birthday, whom she wants to surprise with a cake, and a young neighbour who asks for her help in fixing her wedding dress, which brings her much-needed refreshment. The film is a sensitive portrait of old age and the feelings of powerlessness it causes, which we eventually return to at the end of the film.

The same theme lies in the heart of Senegalese directors Robin Andelfinger and Ibrahima Seydi's *Mama Bobo*. *Mama Bobo* is an old woman who

dresses up every morning then heads to the bus stop. There, she sits and waits as the buses go by, sometimes speaking to people only she sees. "I'm waiting for my husband, he's coming to take me to the market," she explains. Everyone in her village knows that her husband is dead, yet nobody tries to correct her. It is her only refuge in a tough world, and so when the bus stop disappears one day, *Mama Bobo* loses her balance.

Meanwhile, the layered French short *Inside the Wardrobe* by Sébastien Carfora follows a man who has lost his job and has no home except for a closet he takes with him wherever he goes. At first, it appears that the film is about the current housing crisis in France, as recent statistics indicate more than 12 million people in the country endure poor housing conditions. Yet beyond this statement, the film takes us to an enchanting, imaginative world when we discover that this closet was in fact the

protagonist's when he was a child, and that is still bears the marks of his childhood within it.

In *My Festival* by Egyptian director Jaylan Auf, a cinema hall becomes a field of terror when a newly appointed usher loses his mind. When his supervisor asks him to watch the only two viewers in the hall, a young couple, the film takes us on a trip where the usher finds himself caught in a series of horrifying situations—as though his first task on the job triggered all his fears.

As for the other Egyptian film in the competition, *Adel Yehia's Nada*, it follows a deaf dancer and a blind pianist who cross paths. It is more a beautiful story of two people trying to connect than one of battling disability. Although they begin on a rough note, their limitations create within them a gentle compassion that is rare in relationships not faced by such challenges.

**Najet Belhatem**



Mama bobo

# BORIS MITIC: FACTUAL ABSTRACT



*In a T-shirt and shorts along came Boris Mitic. The director of «In Praise of Nothing» is a quirky character yet he's very organized and precise when it comes to his practice. We had the chance to sit with Mitic to talk about his film and his future projects.*

**I read that your background was in journalism. Journalism is very factual, but your film is very conceptual. How did you get from there to here?**

I made a sober decision to quit a highly paid journalistic job and picked up a camera and started to shoot small story in my neighborhood that ended being a successful film and for the next 10 years I discovered what a beautiful world this documentary film world is. But you know it's not always flowers and butterflies either. As you discover it more and more it's not only the ethics and the beauty of truth but it's also another form of journalism, so I went further and escaped documentary film making and I made what I call «Inverted Verite» which aims to achieve levels of truth only possible by using film language.

To give you an example, I use the abstract concept of nothing and its point of view to show another point of view of reality, which is free from all constraints specially objectivity. No one can pin exactly what it is but they can feel it, it has a lot of authority and style and specially self-depreciating humor.

**Your film is conceptually loose kind of, and as you mentioned it's hard to label. How would you describe it?**

I'd say million things, funny, an unlikely feel good documentary, a satirical documentary parable, a whistleblowing documentary parody. It's a documentary because it's not a totally invented thing, every line «Nothing» says to us has a reference in reality, academic or prosaic. Nothing is a legitimate documentary film topic. But at the same time each person is loading it into his own personal experience and his understanding to nothing.

**The production process was very extensive working with 62 cinematographer in 70 countries. How easy was it to channel your concepts to your collaborators?**

The thing is that I didn't need to channel my concept. I really wanted their personal take on the topic. In the beginning I gave them a carte blanche by giving a very broad direction «film me whatever is nothing to you» just make it 20 seconds long and it's documentary meaning that there is no setups or no staging. Whatever is nothing in your cultural background or in geographical environment, whatever in the limits of your equipment or your aesthetic reference or your existential feelings. Over time I gave them more and more instructions

so when they ran out of ideas they would show it to the others, but the catch is we made this little game where nobody knows who filmed what and who's commenting, so you can never know which shot was done by an Oscar winner and which is by you or me. It was a beautiful clash of ideas that led me to more conclusions and instructions to give them to go back and shoot. That game went on till we reached the final stages of the project.

**And how did this impressive process look from the inside?**

The model of course sound amazing but it's full of basic human flaws, it is a question of responsibility, sustained effort, commitment, and taking criticism in a constructive way.

I started this project with seven big names and it was actually funny because how I signed them was that I'd go to one of them and tell him look at this other six names, they're on board, wouldn't you like it if you're with them?! But they turned out to be very impotent, they required specific conditions, cameras, assistants, and we weren't really aligned creatively speaking. On the other hand I'd meet students of mine who are so open to play the game and they would go take shots on their mobile phone and show it to me saying «does this look like nothing?» And I tell you this; the best shots were



taken by these students who didn't care about the references or production scale.

Though it was tough, this process had its fair share of incredible moments. One day I was in contact with two cinematographers at the same time, a Russian cinematographer up north on the Arctic Circle and he's filming and another one in Puntarenas in south Patagonia, Chile, I was communicating with people at the ends of the globe all at once!

**The Choice of Iggy Pop voice to be «Nothing» voice was a really interesting and kind of surprising choice, how did you make this decision?**

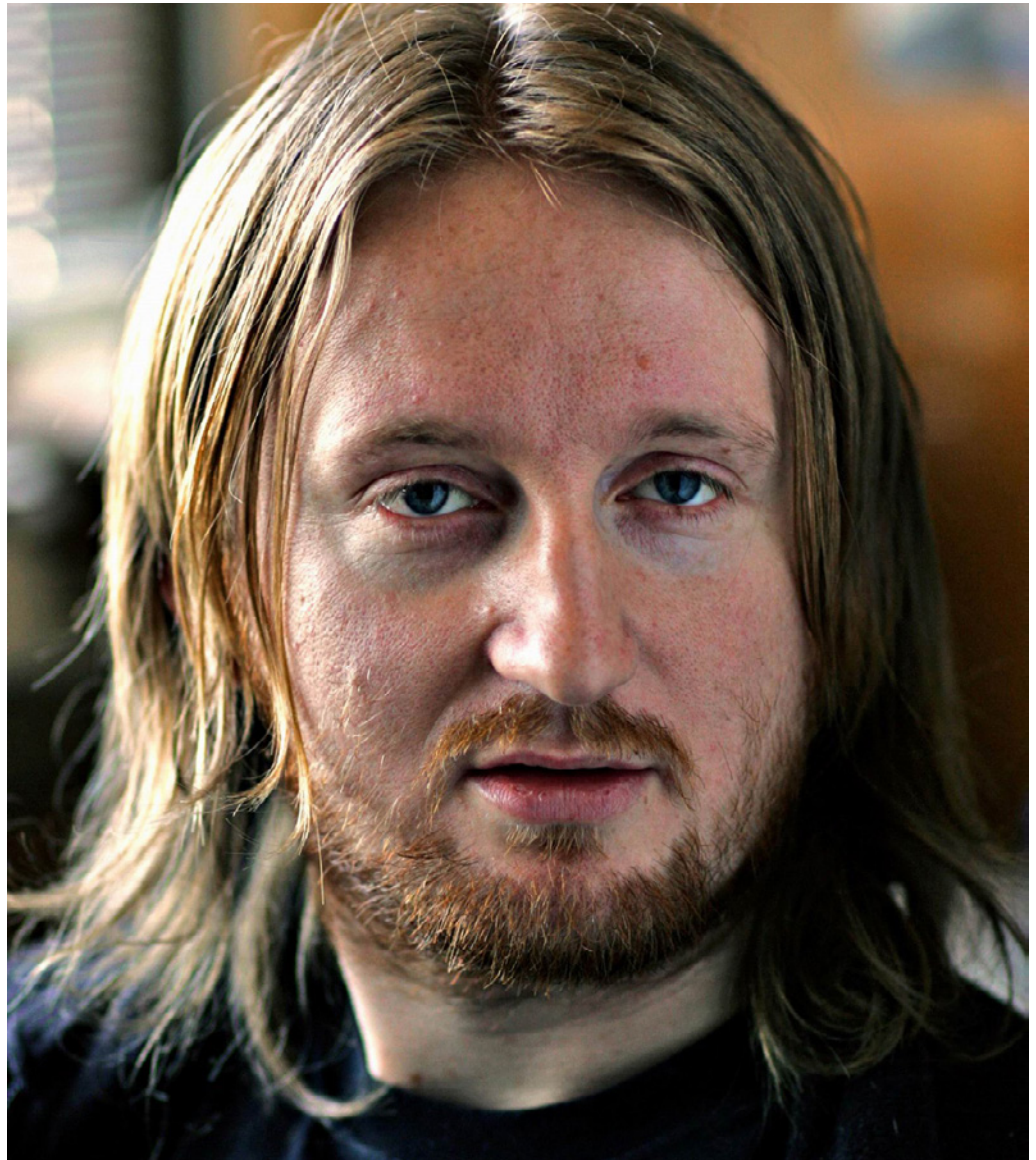
Many things in the production of the film surprised me, I didn't expect to have Iggy Pop, he came along in the seventh year in an 8 year production process. I made up my mind after I saw him singing a French chanson in a Youtube video, and he aged so beautifully and his voice has matured. To me, he symbolizes this punkish, childish attitude and he's full of integrity and personality and at the same time he's serious and ontological though it can be dismissed. For all these things I told myself he is my narrator. I went through different contacts to reach him and then I wrote him emails explaining why I think he should do it, I showed him the text and he liked it and we eventually agreed.

**Your film has a very strong sense of narrative though it's a documentary, do you consider making fiction feature in the future?**

Not at all, I'm very comfortable with taking elements of reality that I'm personally curious about and playing with them. It's a big challenge to know what you're going to film next, you don't want to show a certain reality in a didactic way at the same time you aim to show more points of view in your work, and I think documentary film making manages to open a space for this practice.

What I'm thinking is to make next is a 90 minutes documentary film to and about my kids, but without the kids in it, but that's another 10 years.

**Interviewed by Mohamed El-Hajj**





# “VOLUBILIS”: A SHARP SOCIAL EPIC



Daylight scenes of a couple in love and a routine life. This is not a luxurious life, it's true, but it seems happy – until nighttime scenes drive you to the depths of violence and humiliation.

This is the fingerprint of Faouzi Bensaïdi's "Volubilis", which premiered at the Venice Film Festival only a few days ago. The story of the newly married Malika, a cleaner and Abdelkader, a security guard at a mall is the story of two working-class people who don't even have the chance to express their love for each other as they would like to. For, due to the difficulty of finding a house of their own, they share a room with other members of the family at their parents'. The moments of intimacy they manage to pilfer at the cafe table or in a public park are the ones in which the director uses evocative close-ups. They are always interspersed with scenes of the difficulty of everyday life, however.

The film begins like a fairy tale with the formulaic sentence, Kan ya ma kan (the Arabic equivalent of "Once upon a time"). And things seem romantic enough until suddenly Abdelkader defies a bourgeois woman, the wife of an important man at the mall where he works. At this moment the Moroccan director introduces a different rhythm in which he mixes a range of elements from scenes of humiliation and beating to scenes of violence exchanged between all parties concerned. The moment Abdelkader is detained and beaten viciously at the important man's office opens the door to a new reality in which each character takes its place in a new power game; it's a moment marked by the man opening his office windows.

In a beautiful night scene Abdelkader, who has decided to exact his revenge, is at the door of the important man's house. The house with a glass facade is like a theatre stage upon which the man and his wife silently reveal the nature of their relationship. In many scenes the music chosen by the director plays a significant part, whether it is

rai, Mohamed Abdel Wahhab or Asmahan. This is indeed a constant feature in Bensaïdi's work; in one interview he says, "It's not enough to have studied cinema, you also have to feed on other artistic tributaries like music, art and architecture. Music always inhabits me when I write."

Bensaïdi, whose "A Thousand Months" won Cannes's Un Certain Regard award in 2003, has no particular preference of genre but he is enamoured of Orson Welles, of whom he says, "It's true that many directors started their careers with their eyes turned on this director but as far as I'm concerned personally he is a real model." And Bensaïdi has had a varied career, working in theatre, production and acting. In "Volubilis" he plays the important man,

who says little forcing Bensaïdi to use his face and body alone for expression. The flaccid way in which he hits Abdelkader before handing him over to the group of men who will administer the beating gives ample indication of his relationship to his wife. One evening the film crescendos into a new level to the sound of rai when Malika and Abdelkader, having been separated, return to each other if not to the way they were before.

A social picture of broken spirits, including those with influence, whose fates intersect for a moment, Faouzi Bensaïdi's film shows how the weak – dealing naively with the powerful – will always come out weaker still.

**Nejat Belhatem**

