

A Jaddoland LLC (USA) Production
Co-Produced with Linked Productions
& Enjaaz, a Dubai Film Market Initiative



Jaddoland

Directed by Nadia Shihab

90 min. | USA | 2018

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LOGLINE

A visit to her mother's home art studio in Texas prompts the filmmaker to explore the meaning of home and the search for belonging across three generations of her Iraqi family.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

JADDOLAND explores the meaning of home and the search for belonging across generations. When the filmmaker returns to her hometown in the Texas panhandle to visit her mother, an artist from Iraq, she turns her lens on her mother's increasingly isolated life, as well as the beauty and solace that emerge through her creative process. Soon, the filmmaker's charismatic grandfather arrives from Iraq, prompting the filmmaker on a deeper search to understand her own roots and connections to the places she calls home.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Moving between the playful and the contemplative, JADDOLAND explores the meaning of home and the search for belonging across generations. When the filmmaker returns to her hometown in the Texas panhandle to visit her mother, an artist from Iraq, she turns her lens on her mother's increasingly isolated life, as well as the beauty and solace that emerge through her creative process. Soon, the filmmaker's charismatic grandfather arrives, still longing for the homeland he recently left. While the shadow of geopolitical and historical forces looms on the periphery, the filmmaker searches for unexpected moments of meaning in the everyday, subtly weaving threads between past and present, her mother's work and her own. In doing so, she draws an artful and deeply intimate portrait of one family reimagining its relationships to the places they call home.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When I began filming Jaddoland, my mother was living and working out of her home art studio in Lubbock, Texas, creating a series of paintings that used the Texas and Iraq landscapes interchangeably. As a child, I remember watching her working in this same studio late into the night, sifting through old family photos and handwritten letters in Arabic, reassembling a story that had been scattered across languages and geographies. In the solitude of her self-made sanctuary, making images was a way for her to understand the strange trajectories and layers of her own life.

Her experience of diaspora and dislocation had not only shaped her life and work, but my own as well. As the child of immigrants, I often moved back and forth between cultures, identities and expectations. As a result, when I began to make films, I discovered that I saw a world of double exposure – where the presence of *here* was always imprinted upon the absence of *there*, where “home” and “back home” often coexisted within the same frame.

As I moved between filming and editing, languorous summer days found expression in long uninterrupted takes, while the slippage of memory took form in sudden interludes or playful tangents. While my mom worked in her studio, I retraced familiar paths around my neighborhood, traversing the distance between who we were and who we had become. Along the way, our parallel creative processes intertwined and tangled in moments of shared confusion and catharsis. I had inherited my mother’s lens, but in the act of framing and reframing, I was also making it my own.

In the context of diaspora, where is home and how do we relate to our roots? How do we not only inherit culture, but also reshape it, across generations? And as new migrations overtake previous ones, what does it look like to begin again?

At a time when so many stories about middle eastern immigrants are positioned within larger political narratives of crisis, filming Jaddoland was a way to quietly examine and reflect on our own story while forging an intimate cinematic language of self-representation—one that embraced beauty and mystery, the textures of our longing and desires, and a reimagining of our relationships to home. When I began, I didn’t yet call myself an artist and what I was making was not yet a film. The camera was simply a way to hold the things that I loved close to me, and to redefine and write our story in a language that was our own.



FILMMAKER BIOS

NADIA SHIHAB - Director, Producer & Cinematographer

Nadia Shihab is an artist whose work draws on her interest in diasporic longing, relationships to place, and processes of improvisation. Her films (JADDOLAND, AMAL'S GARDEN, and I COME FROM IRAQ) explore and reassemble personal migratory narratives with a concern for the unseen – spaces of alienation, states of absence, the condition of dislocation – and the ways in which the unnoticed can be intimated and rendered visible. She has also composed music for films and her compositions often build from improvised rhythmic cycles into dense atmospheres streaked with melodic phrasing. Her work has screened in film festivals and galleries internationally and has been supported by the Sundance Institute, Tribeca Film Institute, IFP Documentary Lab, Arab Fund for Arts and Culture, Firelight Media, Center for Cultural Innovation, and Center for Asian American Media. She holds a Masters in City & Regional Planning from UC Berkeley and lives and works in Oakland, California.

TALAL AL-MUHANNA - Producer

Talal Al-Muhanna produces documentaries and features with emerging filmmakers of Arab descent. His films have screened at numerous festivals internationally, won awards, and have aired in the U.S. and Europe on World Channel, ARTE, ZDF, NRK, NTR, YLE, SVT, and DRK, amongst others. Talal produced WHOSE COUNTRY? with ITVS (World Premiere at Hot Docs) and co-executive produced "Emirs" for ARTE France. His Grand Prix award-winning arts documentary DISPORTRAIT was co-produced with ZDF and nominated by the Danish Film Academy for Best Short Documentary in 2015. His projects have been supported by Sundance, Tribeca Film Institute, Doha Film Institute, Enjaaz (Dubai), Visions Sud Est (Switzerland), CNC & Rhone-Alpes Cinema (France), MDM (Germany), MEDIA/Creative Europe and Eurimages. Talal holds an M.A. in Film Production from Leeds Metropolitan University in the U.K. and a Certificate in Fundraising from New York University. He has also served on film juries for Beirut Film Station, La Femis and Talents Beirut, and, in 2015, was selected as a Producing Fellow at the Center for Asian-American Media (CAAM). Talal produced Karim Goury's critically acclaimed autobiographic film THE MAN INSIDE – which was programmed alongside Nadia Shihab's documentary AMAL'S GARDEN at the Dubai International Film Festival in 2012.

AVRİL JACOBSON - Editor

Avrıl Jacobson is an award-winning editor specializing in cinematic documentary and art films. Her films have been selected for Sundance, IDFA, TIFF, True/False, and Hot Docs and she works closely with directors to craft a strong narrative while leaving space for moments of reflection and stillness. In 2015, Avrıl edited the feature documentaries **THE PRISON IN TWELVE LANDSCAPES** and **MICHAEL SHANNON MICHAEL SHANNON JOHN**, both of which were selected for True/False and Hot Docs. **The Prison in Twelve Landscapes** won Hot Docs' Special Jury Prize for Canadian Feature Documentary, was nominated for a Canadian Screen Award for Best Feature Length Documentary and featured as a New York Times Critics' Pick upon its American theatrical release. Avrıl's experience also extends to editing films for public television. In 2016, Avrıl edited the one-hour film **The Skin We're In** for Canadian public television, which follows journalist Desmond Cole as he illustrates the connection between the history of anti-black racism in Canada and present-day power structures. In 2011, she received a Gemini Award for Best Picture Editing in a Documentary Program or Series for **Peep Culture**, a one-hour documentary about our changing relationship to privacy and new media. Other editing credits include **My Prairie Home** (Sundance '14), Jennifer Baichwal's **Payback** (Sundance '12), **Ghost Noise** (IDFA '10), **Deadman** (TIFF '09), **Four Walls** (TIFF '07), and **Spring Hurlbut's Airborne** ('08), which was acquired by the National Gallery of Canada.

SARA DOSA - Associate Producer

SARA DOSA is an award-winning documentary director and producer based in San Francisco, California. Dosa's feature directorial debut, **THE LAST SEASON** made its World Premiere in Competition at the 2014 San Francisco International Film Festival where it took home a Golden Gate Award, and went on to tour the national and international festival circuit. **THE LAST SEASON** was nominated for an Indie Spirit Award, was acquired by PBS for national broadcast and by First Run Features for its 2015 theatrical release. Most recently, she co-produced **AN INCONVENIENT SEQUEL: TRUTH TO POWER**, the follow-up documentary to Al Gore's seminal **AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH**, and produced the award-winning **AUDRIE & DAISY** about teenage sexual assault and bullying. In addition to **THE SEER**, Dosa is currently directing an episode of a forthcoming music docuseries for Netflix; is producing Banker White and Anna Fitch's **SURVIVORS** about Ebola in Sierra Leone as well as their **HEAVEN THROUGH THE BACKDOOR**; and, co-producing Petra Costa's **IMPEACHMENT**. Other credits include the 2013 Sundance award-winning **INEQUALITY FOR ALL** and, the acclaimed Brazilian documentary, **ELENA**. Dosa graduated from Wesleyan University holds a joint Masters in Anthropology and International Development Economics from the London School of Economics.

LARA SARKISSIAN - Associate Producer

Lara Sarkissian is a sound artist, composer, and filmmaker born and based in San Francisco, CA. She is co-founder of CLUB CHAI; a music label, radio show and curatorial project that focuses on the artistic hybridization of non western sounds and visuals with contemporary western culture. Sarkissian's films explore familial narratives, diasporic intimacy, and social issues. In 2016, she produced a story for Emmy award winning filmmaker Bared Maronian's documentary WOMEN OF 1915. Research for this film began from her work in 2013, with the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia to the Kingdom of Denmark in digital archiving never-before-seen artifacts, film and collodion processed photos of the 20th century Armenian Genocide documented by Danish missionaries. Sarkissian produces scores for films and installations. In March & April 2018, she joined the ZKM Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe, Germany as an artist in residence in producing a 360 degree immersive sound and visual installation piece for ISM Hexadome with Jemma Woolmore, alongside residents Brian Eno, Holly Herndon, Thom Yorke, Tarik Barri, and more. In 2017, Sarkissian performed a live score to a screening of her film IR HOKIN HANGEEST at Moscow Museum of Modern Art's 'Hosting the Inhuman' exhibition.

BRUNI BURRES - Creative Consultant

For over 20 years, Bruni Burrees has worked as a festival director and curator, a media educator, creative producer and social media strategist. She is currently a Senior Consultant for Sundance Institute's Documentary Program, expanding its engagement internationally with artists and institutions. She is a mentor and partner with the Greenhouse Documentary Initiative for MENA filmmakers, a consultant with BRITDOC Foundation's Good Pitch, a media strategist with Chiledoc and a senior program advisor for the Middle East Festival Now. Bruni also continues to consult with the World Cinema Foundation and the Open Society Foundations. From 1991 to 2008 Bruni was the director of the Human Rights Watch Film Festival, which she also co-founded. In 2011, in partnership with the International Center for Transitional Justice, Bruni produced several long and short media projects highlighting transitional justice themes including the feature length documentary LA TOMA (The Siege), which explores the lasting cultural and political impact of the 1985 siege of the Palace of Justice in Colombia. Bruni is currently co-producing with ARTE and Alegria Productions, The Wonderful Kingdom of Papa Alaev directed by Noam Pinchas and Tal Barda. She was also co-producer on Mohamed Siam's WHOSE COUNTRY? Bruni serves on the board of the Educational Video Center and Working Films. Bruni received a BA in American studies from Barnard College/Columbia University and an MA in professional studies from the Interactive Telecommunications Program at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

NELS BANGERTER - Consulting Editor

Nels Bangarter is an award-winning and Emmy-nominated documentary film editor with over a decade of feature-length experience. His work includes LET THE FIRE BURN, winner of Best Editing awards from the International Documentary Association, Cinema Eye Honors, and Tribeca Film Festival; CAMERAPERSON, which premiered at Sundance and won grand jury awards for Best Documentary at San Francisco International Film Festival, Sheffield, DOXA, and Montclair; HBO's VERY SEMI-SERIOUS, which was nominated for two Emmys including Outstanding Documentary Editing; KUMU HINA, the ITVS-sponsored winner of the GLAAD Media Award for Best Documentary and PBS's Independent Lens Audience Award; and WAR CHILD, which premiered at Berlin and won Tribeca's Audience Award. Nels has been a Sundance Lab Advisor and has shared his experience on panels at Tribeca, Sundance, Full Frame, and True/False Film Festivals. He has mentored projects for S.F. Rough Cuts, and has given presentations for the Karen Schmeer Film Editing Fellowship/Sundance D.F.P. and Docs In Progress. He has advised numerous projects as an editorial consultant.



CREDITS

Director/Writer/DP: Nadia Shihab
Producers: Talal Al-Muhanna & Nadia Shihab
Associate Producers: Sara Dosa & Lara Sarkissian
Editor: Avriil Jacobson
Creative Consultant: Bruni Burres
Consulting Editor: Nels Bangerter
Sound Design: Daniel Olmsted
Color Correction: Robert Arnold
Production companies: Jaddoland LLC (USA) & Linked Productions (Kuwait)

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TECHNICAL DETAILS

Year of production:	2018
Duration:	90 minutes
Aspect Ratio & Format:	2k, 1998x1080(1:85:1),16:9
Sound:	5.1 Surround
Original Shooting Format:	HD
Exhibition Format:	DCP, Apple Pro Res
Languages in the film:	English, Arabic, Turkmen
Subtitled versions available:	English
Camera/s:	Canon XA10
Available Media:	DCP (CRU drive & Flash drive)



SCREENINGS

- 2019 Kassel Dokfest
- 2019 San Diego Asian Film Festival
- 2019 Virginia Film Festival
- 2019 Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival
- 2019 Arab Film Festival
- 2019 Flatland Film Festival
 - 2019 Austin Asian American Film Festival
 - *Best Documentary Feature*
- 2019 CAAMFest
- 2019 DOXA Documentary Film Festival
- 2019 Ecrans du Réel
- 2019 Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival
 - *Special Jury Award for Documentary Feature*
- 2019 Dallas International Film Festival
- 2019 Ashland Independent Film Festival
- 2019 Indie Grits
- 2018 Houston Cinema Arts Festival
- 2018 New Orleans Film Festival [WORLD PREMIERE]
 - *Special Jury Mention for Best Documentary*

