

ABOUT PRODUCTIONS

PRESENTS



COSTA BRAVA, LEBANON

A FILM BY MOUNIA AKL

2021 – LEBANON, FRANCE, SPAIN, SWEDEN, DENMARK, NORWAY, QATAR
DRAMA – 2K – 5.1 – ARABIC – 107'

mk2
FILMS



SYNOPSIS

The free-spirited Badri family have escaped the toxic pollution and social unrest of Beirut by seeking refuge in the utopic mountain home they have built. But unexpectedly, a garbage landfill is built right outside their fence, bringing the trash and corruption of a whole country to their doorstep.

As the landfill rises, so do tensions between leaving or resisting, threatening their idyllic home and family unity.

Mounia Akl makes her highly anticipated debut (Cinéfondation Residency, Torino Film Lab, Sundance Institute Lab), with a darkly comic commentary on the realities of modern-day Lebanon.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Growing up in Lebanon, I was surrounded by chaos and poetry. The country was always on the verge of an apocalypse, leading us to live in the present though never sleep peacefully.

This was both within the confines of my home and family, and the broader confines of the country. I was often surrounded by people in extreme states of being and I developed a fascination with human flaws and the truth that emerges in times of personal tragedy.

I started observing the tools that we arm ourselves with to fight trauma, often reverting to impulse or denial. This dichotomy is what Lebanon is, and who I have become. It has brought our society to a place of absurdity and has driven people to reinvent and sterilize their homes to protect themselves from a dystopian reality that is too painful to face. It has also armed us with limitless imagination, humor and a visceral experience of life.

Today however, even that escape is no longer possible. The dystopia has entered our hearts.

In *Costa Brava, Lebanon*, I try to look at this family's structure in hopes of mirroring the one of our society. The Badri family's ideal of staying pure by disdaining society is an escapist fantasy. But from fracture and discord there is an opportunity for the Badri family – and Lebanon – to rebuild with clear-eyed truth and compassion.

Mounia Akl

ABOUT THE FILM

OUR CHARACTERS

THE PARENTS

Walid and Souraya are two complex souls who met during protests, fell in love and healed some of each other's deepest wounds. The home they built is their shared project. They made the decision to leave Beirut at a time when they were disgusted with the country's political and literal filth. The pain of living with no dignity was no longer bearable.

SOURAYA (NADINE LABAKI), 43

Souraya was a famous singer and activist who toured the world with her music. She met Walid at a time of personal burnout, when she needed to step away from the excesses that accompanied her lifestyle. Walid provided a healthier path, introducing her to nature and family life. He also convinced her that the battle for the country was lost. For Souraya, the arrival of the outside world constitutes a reminder of the woman she was, the one she misses. And mostly, the fight for change.

WALID (SALEH BAKRI), 45

Walid is an idealist with a temper. A hypochondriac turned misanthrope. After giving his heart and soul to the country, he reached a place where he lost hope. He believes that the world and the country have become too rotten to continue fight for and has chosen to live in a bubble rather than facing constant trauma. Walid has gone off the grid in the family's country retreat in the mountains in search of an ideal of self-reliance in splendid isolation from a deeply corrupt society. He has armed his kids with limitless imagination and love and has done everything to create what he sees as the best home for them, an open-air prison of love. His big heart, charm and humor often mask his controlling nature and behavior.

THE SISTERS

RIM (CEANA RESTOM / GEANA RESTOM), 9

Rim was born on this land and has never seen the world outside. She is the pure product of her father's Utopia and the queen of his kingdom. She would do anything to protect it and has inherited her father's fear of the outside world which we observe through obsessive compulsive behavior. She is untamed and doesn't take no for an answer. She adores her sister but often brings her back to earth when her daydreams take her too far.

TALA (NADIA CHARBEL), 17

Tala was 7 when they moved out of Beirut. She is introverted and filled with repressed questions about the world and her mother's past. She seeks her father's approval and wishes she had the relationship Rim has with him. When the men tied to the landfill construction arrive outside her fence, her burgeoning sexuality rises to the surface and she crosses to a new chapter of her life - one that doesn't include her sister.

THE GRANDMOTHER & THE AUNT

ZEINA (LILIANE CHACAR KHOURY), 79

Zeina is Walid's mother, and he is the love of her life. They have a close relationship that grew even more when his abusive father passed away and her health decreased. Zeina brings a lot of humor to the home with her constant complaints about green living and her obsession

with returning to her Beirut social life. She is not aware of what the city has truly become. The arrival of the landfill and its men is a breath of fresh air for her.

ALIA (YUMNA MARWAN), 39

Alia is Walid's sister who has been an expat in Colombia for 15 years where she works in finance. Alia represents the Lebanese who left Lebanon brokenhearted to build a life with more dignity elsewhere. She feels displaced wherever she is. Alia's presence is always felt at home though, on the screen of Zeina's phone.

POLITICAL CONTEXT

Lebanon's waste crisis exploded in 2015 when a huge landfill site closed and government authorities failed to implement a contingency plan in time to replace it. Dumping and burning waste on the streets became widespread. When the rubbish crisis first started, it stimulated a civil movement; protestors rallied outside the Lebanese government and declared "You Stink." While the protests began over trash, they expanded to issues of civil representation, corruption and government inefficiency. This crisis represented everything that was wrong with the country since the end of the Civil War. In October 2019, a revolution started giving momentary hope. It was then followed by a financial collapse, a world pandemic and the third biggest explosion of the world in August 2020. The country fell apart and people felt angry and hopeless.

GREEN PRODUCTION

For the first time in the Arab region, green measures were implemented to create sustainability on set (recycling, saving water and electricity, reducing carbon emissions) with a goal to come up with a protocol that can be adopted by other film crews in Lebanon and in the MENA region.

ABOUT MOUNIA AKL

Mounia Akl is an award-winning Lebanese filmmaker. Her short film, *Submarine* (2016), was in the Official Selection of the 69th Cannes Film Festival (Cin fondation), SXSW, TIFF and Dubai Film Festival where it won the Muhr Jury Prize. In 2017, Mounia took part in the Lebanon Factory and co-directed a short film *El Gran Libano* which opened Cannes Directors' Fortnight and screened at BFI London among others.

Costa Brava, Lebanon was developed during the Cannes' Cin fondation Residency. The project was also selected to participate in Torino Film Lab Feature Lab and in Sundance Institute Screenwriters and Director's Lab.

Mounia holds a bachelor's degree in Architecture from ALBA and an MFA in Directing from Columbia University. She has taught film directing at the NHSI Film Summer Institute at Northwestern University, Chicago.

Mounia is currently developing new projects, in TV and Film, one of which being her second feature film.

FILMOGRAPHY

Director

2021 COSTA BRAVA, LEBANON | Feature Drama, 106'
2019 DO NOT DISTURB | TV Series documentary short (1 episode)
2017 EL GRAN LIBANO | Short Comedy, 18'
2017 LEBANON FACTORY | 70'

Writer-Director

2016 SUBMARINE | Short Drama, 21'
2014 EVA | Short Drama, 8'
2014 CHRISTINE | Short
2011 BEIRUT, I LOVE YOU | TV Series (44 episodes)
2011 ANOESIS | Short Comedy, 6'
2010 CHEERS, TO THOSE WHO STAY | Short, 20'
2009 BEIRUT, I LOVE YOU YOU (I LOVE YOU NOT) | Short, 10'

Writer

2017 THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT | Short, 19'
2014 BETWEEN CURTAINS | Short, 15'
2012 FASATEEN: DRESSES | TV Mini-Series

CAST

Souraya	Nadine Labaki
Walid	Saleh Bakri
Tala	Nadia Charbel
Rim	Ceana Restom & Geana Restom
Alia	Yumna Marwan
Zeina	Liliane Chacar Khoury
Tarek	François Nour

CREW

Writer - Director	Mounia Akl
Co-Writer	Clara Roquet
Producers	Myriam Sassine, Georges Schoucair
Co-Producers	Sophie Erbs, Sergi Moreno, Olivier Guerpillon, Ingrid Lill Høgtun, Katrin Pors, Tom Dercourt, Tono Folguera, Eva Jakobsen, Mikkel Jersin, Joakim Rang Strand
Executive Producers	Jeff Skoll, Anikah McLaren, Fouad Mikati, Candice Abela Mikati, Karam Abulhusn, Monique Dib, Lara El Khoury, Elie Tabet, Harriet Harper Jones
Director of Photography	Joe Saade
Editors	Carlos Marques-Marcet, Cyril Aris
Visual Effects Supervisor	Peter Hjorth
Original Score Composer	Nathan Larson
Additional Score	Zeid Hamdan
Sound Designer	Rana Eid
Re-recording Mixer	Peter Albrechtsen
Sound Recordist	Rawad Hobeika
Production Design	Thomas Bremer, Issa Kandil
Art Director	Hanady Medlej
Costume Designer	Beatrice Harb
Production Supervisor	Nermine Haddad
Line Producers	Ginger Beirut Productions, Abla Khoury & Lara KaramChekerdjian
Production Manager	Raja Zgheib
Produced by	About Productions
In Co-Production with	Cinema Defacto, Lastor Media, Fox In The Snow Films, Snowglobe, Barentsfilm, Gaijin
In Association with	mk2 films, Participant, Boo Pictures
With the Support of	Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée, Région Île-de- France, Ciclic-Région Centre-Val de Loire, Doha Film Institute, Sørfond - Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Fonds Image de la Francophonie, TorinoFilmLab with the support of the Creative Europe - MEDIA Programme of the European Union, Visions Sud Est with the support of the SDC (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation), The Swedish Film Institute, The Danish Film Institute, The Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC), The Beirut DC Madar Fund, the Sundance Institute Feature Film Program
With the Financing of	Instituto de la Cinematografía - Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte - Gobierno de España
With the Participation of	Departament de cultura - Institut Català de les Empreses Culturals - Generalitat de Catalunya
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