



la Biennale di Venezia

Biennale College  
Cinema

LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA presents

شهيد

# MARTYR

a film by MAZEN KHALED

WITH CAROLE ABDOU  
AND RANITA MUKAD, MOSHAY TARE, GARY BOB AYASH, RAGDAD NADEREDDINE, RABIE EL ZAKI, YARA ABDO HADAD, MOHAMMAD HIL, HUSSEIN SABBAR

directors of photography: TALAL KHORRAM, RACHA ELIA sound designer: VICTOR BREZZO music composers: ZED HANSEN, VLADIMIR KOSTINELAN  
sound mixer: MIKAIL BABI colourist: RALF HORN production designer: BISHAM AKHILAN written and directed by MAZEN KHALED  
produced by DALIA KACHNAB production and executive: ARTOP PRODUCTION

with the support of: MINISTERO DEL BENE E DELLE ATTIVITA' CULTURALI E DEL TURISMO, FONDAZIONE LIBAN CINEMA, ROBERT WATKIN FOUNDATION  
in collaboration with: SUSAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, OF, IT

# MARTYR

A FILM BY MAZEN KHALED

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Lebanon, Italy | ov. Arabic | 84' | 2017



**WORLD PREMIERE**

74<sup>th</sup> Mostra del Cinema di Venezia  
Biennale College

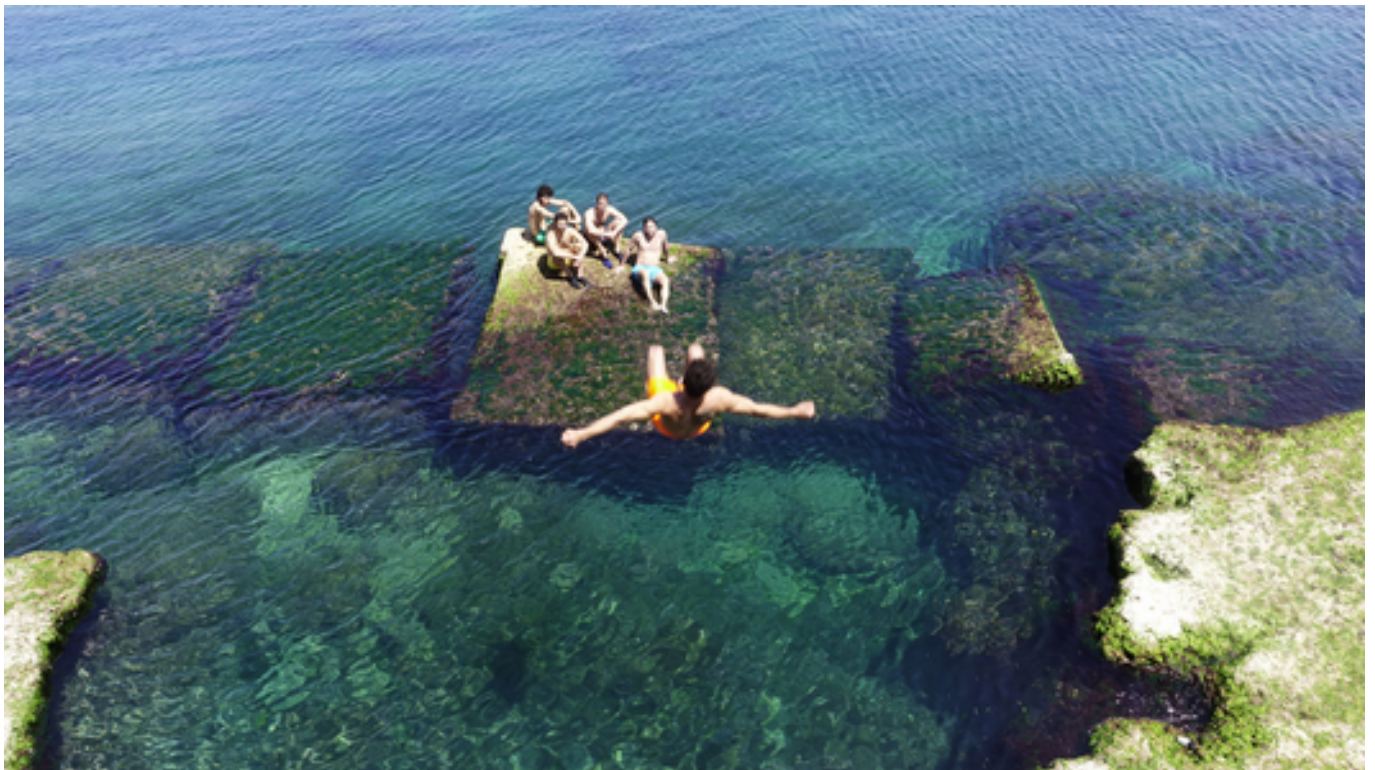




## SYNOPSIS

For Hassane, a young man from an impoverished neighborhood, life has stopped making sense. All he has left is a close group of friends, brought together by a shared sense of marginalization and hopelessness.

Hassane's strange sudden drowning at Beirut's rocky shore sparks a mob procession, and strips apart the bond of youth and friendship, forcing his friends to grapple with loss and powerlessness, and with the cold heavy truth of their friend's dead body. The funeral is transformed into a heartfelt farewell to the beauty and sensuality of life, youth, friendship, and love.



## CAST & CREW

Carol Abboud  
Hamza Mekdad  
Mostafa Fahs  
Hady Bou Ayash  
Rachad Nassereddine  
Rabih el Zaher  
Raneem Mourad

**DIRECTOR** Mazen Khaled  
**SCRIPT** Mazen Khaled  
**PRODUCTION** Diala Kachmar  
**CINEMATOGRAPHY** Rachelle Noja & Talal Khoury  
**EDITING** Vartan Avakian  
**SOUND DESIGN** Victor Bresse  
**MUSIC** Zeid Hamdan and Vladimir Kurumilian  
**COLORIST** Belal Hibri

## DIRECTOR

Mazen Khaled was born in Beirut, Lebanon. After a period spent in policy analysis and research, he moved to Advertising where he wrote and directed TV ads as part of his work as creative director. He studied and worked in Beirut, Washington DC, Dubai, and Montreal.

Mazen's work tends to focus on the human body, framing it aesthetically, but also placing it within the frameworks of spirituality, family, and society. This stems out of a conviction that when bodies come together, it is in defiance of an impossible, or in exploration of truth. The singular result is a fleeting and difficult to capture construction of a unique aesthetic.



## FILMOGRAPHY

**A Petty Bourgeois Dream** | 2016 | Feature | 104 min

**In Search of Stillness** and **The Still Life Series** | 2015

**Dans les Bras de Noir:** |2015 | Experimental video | 10 min

**Hypnopompic** | 2013 | Experimental video | 20 min

**A Very dangerous Man** | 2012 | Experimental Narrative | 16 min

**Our Gentleman of the Wings** | | Experimental narrative 16 mm | 15 min

**My Queer Samsara** | 2010 | Experimental Narrative | 16 mm | 10 min

**Cadillac Blues** | 2002 | Narrative |26 min

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Beirut is a Mediterranean city, with a waterfront promenade that we lovingly refer to as the Corniche. It is lined with a balustrade that divides its dangerous local activity, performed with crowds watching and cheering. The two young men died performing, trying to please a crowd.

Why did they do that? It hit me that the balustrade is the borderline of the city. Those young divers are literally jumping out of society into their freedom. From talking with some of them, I understood that they all come from underprivileged communities in poor neighborhoods: Suffocating neighborhoods whose streets are plastered with posters of martyrs, and whose crammed up buildings deny light's natural right to seep through; overcrowded neighborhoods where jungles of electrical wires carry stolen electricity into small homes, where people are drowning in marginality and hopelessness, but, most of all, where people have no prospect of ever leaving those neighborhoods. It struck me that the sea is their liberty, their escape.

The Corniche is where the from the rocky shore below. The shore is a homosocial space. Men cavort, swim, and establish their pecking orders amongst each other. Various videos have been made about this phenomenon. Until a few years back, when I started researching for this project, I myself had never crossed the balustrade. One day, I asked some guys if they minded being followed around and I crossed, with a strapped-on camera. The result was the starting point of this project.

The idea for the film became clear in my head when I heard about a couple of young men dying while diving from the balustrade.

Diving from the balustrade is a y brush up against society, but also where they turn their naked backs to it and where they jump out of it into the vastness of the horizon.

The propagandists of war would tell us otherwise, but aren't the men who died diving the true martyrs, pushed by society to its literal edge?





## FESTIVALS & SCREENINGS

74 Venice International Film Festival

MedFilm Festival

Belgrade International Film Festival

SXSW

BFI FLARE London LGBT+ Film Festival

Subversive Film Festival

Sicilia Queer International New Visions FilmFest

Guanajuato International Film Festival

Lebanese Film Festival Sydney

Omladinski Film Festival Sarajevo

Queer Lisboa - International Film Festival - Special Jury Mention



## PRODUCTION COMPANY



### ArTrip

ArTrip production is a production company established in 2013 and based in Beirut. The company was created by ambitious Lebanese filmmakers Fadi Nassereddine and Diala Kachmar. Diala and Fadi had worked together and independently on several Film projects as both producers and directors. They decided to join hands in establishing a structure that would carry their work and the work of other filmmakers with the aim of creating a new window for independent media projects in Lebanon.

ArTrip production aims to produce Lebanese Documentary and Narrative films, TV series, in addition to offering production and post-production services for other media projects.



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**ARTIP**  
Production

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Diala Kachmar  
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