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SHAYDA



Written and Directed by **Noora Niasari**

Starring **Zar Amir Ebrahimi, Osamah Sami, Leah Purcell, Jillian Nguyen, Mojean Aria, Selina Zahednia, Rina Mousavi**

Produced by **Vincent Sheehan, Noora Niasari**

Executive Produced by **Cate Blanchett, Andrew Upton, Coco Francini, Caitlin Gold, Lindsay Lanzillotta, Lois Scott, Naomi, Mcdougall Jones, Nivedita Kulkarni, Gabrielle Stewart, Tom Grievson**

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LOGLINE

SHAYDA, a brave Iranian mother, finds refuge in an Australian women's shelter with her six-year-old daughter. Over Persian New Year, they take solace in Nowruz rituals and new beginnings, but when her estranged husband re-enters their lives, Shayda's path to freedom is jeopardized.

SYNOPSIS

An Iranian woman living in Australia, Shayda finds refuge in a women's shelter with her frightened 6-year-old daughter, Mona. Having fled her husband, Hossein, and filed for divorce, Shayda struggles to maintain normalcy for Mona. Buoyed by the approach of Nowruz (Persian New Year), she tries to forge a fresh start with new and unfettered freedoms. But when a judge grants Hossein visitation rights, he re-enters their life, stoking Shayda's fear that he'll attempt to take Mona back to Iran.

Drawn from personal experiences, Iranian-Australian filmmaker Noora Niasari's powerful debut feature is a beautifully crafted, poetic *vérité* portrayal of courage and compassion, anchored by a heart-rending performance by Zar Amir Ebrahimi (2022 Cannes' best actress award winner for *Holy Spider*). Ebrahimi captures the vulnerability and confliction, but also the radiant soul of an Iranian woman who boldly reclaims her human rights: to divorce her husband, keep her child, and dress as she chooses.

FILMMAKER'S STATEMENT

When I was five years old, my first experience of freedom was inside an Australian women's shelter, living alongside other women and children seeking a life without fear.

Despite being a world away from our family in Iran, my mother taught me how to speak Farsi, how to celebrate Nowruz, how to Persian dance, read poetry, and above all, she taught me about the resilience and strength of Iranian women.

Women like my mother were ostracized for seeking basic human rights. The right to ask for divorce, to have custody over their children, to choose how they dress, to dance in the streets, to let their hair flow in the wind and exhale.

That's all my mother wanted, these basic freedoms, for herself and for her daughter. She found these freedoms for us in Australia but our nostalgia for our homeland never ceases.

I never imagined a day would come where a Women led Revolution would take hold in Iran as it is today. I am in awe of the millions of mothers and daughters fighting for these freedoms. This film is dedicated to my mother and the brave women and girls of Iran.

Noora Niasari — *writer, director, producer*

ROAD TO PRODUCTION

Producer Vincent Sheehan first met Noora Niasari in late 2017. A 20 minute general meeting was scheduled and an hour later they were still talking. Noora described a moment, a situation, a clash of cultures – a women’s shelter in the 1990s. For Vincent “the emotion and the connection she exuded about her story was affecting and resonated long after - here was a new voice. A brave one. A distinctive one”.

Over the next two years Noora wrote the screenplay for SHAYDA working with renowned Australian script editor Lynne Vincent McCarthy and with development funds from VicScreen and Screen Australia.

There has been a recent appetite for cross-cultural and personal films like MINARI (Lee Isaac Chung), FAREWELL (Lulu Wang) and ADAM (Maryam Touzani) as well as films that explore the moral ambiguities within Iranian culture like the Oscar winning films of Asghar Farhadi. Authentic stories that illuminate Iranian/Middle Eastern experiences resonate strongly because audiences can gain insights through a human lens rather than stereotypes of mainstream media. These films have been hugely successful and have been touchstones for the script of SHAYDA and Noora’s work and informed the approach to finding distribution and finance partners.

In 2021 Cate Blanchett, Andrew Upton and Coco Francini of Dirty Films joined the producing team, lifting the project’s profile and, along with Noora’s UTA agent Jessica Kantor, secured sales agent HanWay Films and The 51 Fund - a private equity fund dedicated to financing narrative and documentary feature films directed by female filmmakers. A dynamic set of producing and market partners and a testament not only to the power of Noora’s story but to her focus, passion and ambition to bring an outward looking film about the vibrant and engrossing Iranian-Australian experience to the widest possible international audience.

Investment then came from the MIFF (Melbourne International Film Festival) Premiere Fund who offer minority co-financing to new Australian quality theatrical films (narrative and documentary) and Madman Entertainment as the Australian Distributor. With HanWay and UTA on for sales, Screen Australia then came on board as the principal equity investor along with VicScreen who provide grant investment to films developed and produced in the state of Victoria.

SHAYDA was shot in July and August 2022 in the suburbs of Melbourne, Australia. Set in 1995, the period settings and detail of the story demanded authenticity. The East Doncaster and Dandenong suburbs remained largely unchanged from this period and allowed the production to step back in time to what is a very particular period of fashion, design and technology.

Consultation and engagement with the Iranian Australian community was an essential part of making SHAYDA and the filmmakers are indebted to the community for their support, participation and generosity.

SHAYDA premiered in World Dramatic Competition at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival winning the Audience Award and Sony Pictures Classic acquiring all media rights in North America, Latin America, Benelux, Eastern Europe, Portugal, the Middle East and Turkey.

DIRTY FILMS (Executive Producers)

Dirty Films is an independent film and TV production company consisting of partners Cate Blanchett, Andrew Upton, and Coco Francini. Their film credits include LITTLE FISH, CAROL, TRUTH, and THE TURNING. Dirty Films has recently produced renowned Indigenous director Warwick Thornton’s THE NEW BOY, which stars Blanchett as a renegade nun and had its world premiere in the Un Certain Regard program at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival and opened the Sydney Film Festival. They also produced the upcoming Apple

Original film FINGERNAILS, directed by Christos Nikou and starring Academy Award nominated Jessie Buckley and Academy Award winner Riz Ahmed, also due for release in 2023. Prior to this, Dirty Films executive produced Christos Nikou's APPLES, which was named one of 2020's Best International Films by the National Board of Review. Their upcoming projects include THE CHAMPIONS – to be directed by Ben Stiller, PEACHES – to be directed by Jenny Suen, and an adaptation of Lucia Berlin's A MANUAL FOR CLEANING WOMEN.

Dirty Film's television arm produced FX's MRS. AMERICA (nominated for 10 Emmy Awards) and Netflix's STATELESS (winner of 13 AACTA Awards). Dirty Films supports The Writers Lab (UK & Ireland), the only program devoted exclusively to script development for women-identifying writers over 40.

"Dirty Films has always wanted to champion filmmakers with stories that are both timely and timeless," says Blanchett, Upton, and Francini, "Noora Niasari's intensely personal story is precisely that."

Dirty Films first encountered Noora's work through her crystalline short films THE PHOENIX and TÂM – both of which showcased Noora's unique perspective charged with visceral humanity and vivid emotion.

"When we read SHAYDA, we immediately knew Noora would illuminate all the nuances of her heartbreaking and triumphant story. Set in Australia in the 1990s and told through the eyes of a child, Noora's film SHAYDA bears witness to the aching vulnerability of the people we want to be the most invincible – our parents. Now, in the wake of the seismic women's revolution happening half a world away in Iran, the film resonates these domestic personal emotions into a global cultural conversation. The film is not only a heart-wrenching personal story about defining one's own path, but also an examination of the social and cultural forces that lie in opposition to our heroine, Shayda, tenderly brought to life by the magnificent actress Zar Amir Ebrahimi."

THE 51 FUND (Executive Producers)

The 51 Fund, which financed and executive produced SHAYDA, is a private equity company funding narrative and documentary films by female filmmakers. 51 focuses not simply on amplifying women's voices, but on demonstrating, through dollars, that investing in women yields high returns. The company launched in 2020 with Parker Hill and Isabel Bethencourt's acclaimed debut documentary feature, CUSP, which premiered at Sundance '21 and was acquired by Showtime. On the heels of CUSP, the company continued funding documentaries (next up they have Lisa D'Apolito's SHARI & LAMB CHOP and Jade Sacker's A HOUSE DIVIDED). But in the narrative space, they knew their first move had to be something uniquely special – an undeniable new voice coupled with a story both audiences and buyers would be excited by.

"When Jessica Kantor at UTA first pitched me the project, I didn't see it as our first play in the narrative space," says 51 Co-Founder and Co-Head of Film, Caitlin Gold. "On the surface, it was a tough sell. Foreign film, difficult subject matter. But Jess encouraged me to just give it a read and watch Noora's shorts. I fell in love immediately and quickly shared it with the team and it was a resounding and unanimous 'yes' from all of us." Adds 51 Co-Founder and Co-Head of Film Lindsay Lanzillotta: "We're honored to be a part of this journey, of Noora being able to finally share her deeply personal and moving story with the world and to do so at this critical moment in history when a revolution is taking place on the other side of the world."

From 51 Co-Founder and Chief Impact Officer, Naomi McDougall Jones:

"SHAYDA is the epitome of everything we started The 51 Fund for: to elevate extraordinary talents like Noora, to bring the world's attention to a story that might historically have gone under-appreciated, and to demonstrate beyond a reasonable doubt that brave, original stories by and about women yield strong financial returns for investors."

ABOUT THE CAST

ZAR AMIR EBRAHIMI (Shayda)

Zar Amir Ebrahimi is an Iranian-French actress, producer and director. She rose to international prominence for her performance in the crime thriller HOLY SPIDER (2022), Denmark's submission for the Academy Awards. She won the Cannes Film Festival award for best actress, Robert Award and Seville Film Festival Award for best actress. She got also nominated for European Film Awards, LOLA (German Film Awards) and Bodil Awards (Danish Film Critics Awards Association) for her performance in HOLY SPIDER.

Born in Tehran, Iran, actress Zar Amir Ebrahimi, graduated Azad University of Tehran, majoring in dramatic arts. She first directed a short film named KHAT (2000), produced by the Iranian Youth Cinema Society. Her career took off acting in the feature film WAITING (2001) by Mohammed Nourizad and gained national attention with series such as HELP ME (2004) and NARGESS (2006).

In 2008, she moved to Paris and continued her acting career by appearing both on stage and in front of the camera. Her film TEHRAN TABOO directed by Ali Soozandeh premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 2017 and in 2018 she won Best Actress at the Nice International Film Festival for her performance in BRIDE PRICE VS DEMOCRACY directed by Reza Rahimi. Her film TIDE directed by Manon Coubia premiered in 2019 Locarno Film Festival and the film TOMORROW WE ARE FREE directed by Hossein Pourseifi screened at the Talinn Black Nights Film Festival and Filmfest Hamburg, among others.

Her upcoming film, SHAYDA, directed and written by Noora Niasari, had its world premiere at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival where it won the Audience Award. She also starred in THE WORST ENEMY by Mehran Tamadon and SEVEN WINTERS IN TEHRAN by Steffi Niedertzoll that had their world premiere at the 2023 Berlinale Film Festival. In France, LES SURVIVANTS (White Paradise), a contemporary western directed by Guillaume Renusson, was released in cinemas in January 2023. Zar also stars in "READING LOLITA IN TEHRAN" (2023) directed by Eran Riklis, which is now in post-production.

She is currently co-directing a political-thriller film with working title of TATAMI with Guy Nattiv (2019 Academy Award winner) in which she stars too. Zar founded ALAMBIC Production in Paris in 2019 and continues producing movies. She also participates in movie projects as a casting director, including HOLY SPIDER (Ali Abbasi), OPPONENT (Milad Alami) and Noora Niasari's upcoming second feature RAYA.

As a result of using her film projects and voice to bravely demand change for women in Iran, Zar was selected for BBC 100 Women 2022, a prestigious list of inspiring and influential women from around the world.

Always looking to champion filmmakers around the world, Zar presided over the jury of the 2023 Gothenburg Film Festival which is the largest film festival in the Nordic countries and she is one of the guest jury members of 2023 ANDAM fashion awards, alongside Gigi Hadid and Pat Cleveland.

SELINA ZAHEDNIA (Mona)

Selina Zahednia is our 7-year-old, breakout star of SHAYDA. Born in Iran, Selina now lives with her family in Melbourne, Australia. Selina enjoys tennis, lollipops and pottery. SHAYDA is Selina's first feature film and she is very excited to walk the red carpet with her co-star Zar Amir Ebrahimi.

OSAMAH SAMI (Hossein)

Osamah Sami is an award-winning actor, writer, and comedian, born in war-torn Iran to Iraqi parents. His critically acclaimed memoir *GOOD MUSLIM BOY* was the winner of the NSW Premier's Literary Award and Highly Commended at the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards. It was also adapted for the stage in 2018 for Malthouse Theatre Co and Queensland Theatre, selling out both seasons.

Osamah recently starred opposite Zar Amir Ebrahimi (winner Best Actress at Cannes) in *SHAYDA* (written and directed by Noora Niasari, producer Vincent Sheehan, Noora Niasari and EP'd by Cate Blanchett). *SHAYDA* premiered as one of the Opening Night films of 2023 Sundance where it won the Audience Award.

Osamah also co-wrote and starred in the hit Australian film *ALI'S WEDDING*, which was the winner of the Audience Award for Best Feature Film at Sydney Film Festival, as well as The Age Critics Prize for Best Australian Film, and the Cinéfest Oz Prize for Best Film. His screenplay earned him an Australian Academy (AACTA) Award, an Australian Writers Guild (AWGIE) Award, and a Film Critics Circle of Australia (FCCA) Award for Best Screenplay. He also received AACTA Award, FCCA Award, and Australian Critics Choice Award nominations for Best Lead Actor.

In 2016, his work in Melbourne Theatre Company's *I CALL MY BROTHERS* earned him a Green Room Award nomination for Best Lead Actor on a Main Stage production. Osamah was winner of Creative Artist of the Year at the Australian Muslim Achievement Awards (2019). He is also recognized as a 'Notable Australian Muslim' by the Commonwealth of Australia. Currently, Osamah is in Pre-Production for his highly anticipated TV Series *HOUSE OF GODS*, for which is the Co-Creator, Writer, and lead, produced by Matchbox Pictures for the ABC.

LEAH PURCELL (Joyce)

Leah Purcell is one of Australia's leading actors, writers, and directors with award-winning roles across all mediums. She is a proud Goa-Gunggari-Wakka Wakka Murri woman from QLD.

THE DROVER'S WIFE THE LEGEND OF MOLLY JOHNSON is Leah's debut feature film which premiered at SXSW as part of their Narrative Spotlight programme in March 2021. The film is directed by and written by Leah, co-produced by her production company Oombarra Productions, and sees Leah star in the leading role of Molly Johnson. Her previous adaptations of *THE DROVER'S WIFE* include the multi-award winning theatrical play which was a sell-out success at Belvoir St Theatre, and the novel which is currently available through Penguin Random House.

Leah's extensive career has seen her in leading roles in the TV series *POLICE RESCUE*, *REDFERN NOW*, and *JANET KING*. She is currently playing the main role of Rita Connors in Foxtel / Fremantle's internationally acclaimed series *WENTWORTH*, where she was nominated for Best Lead Actor in a Television Series at the AACTA Awards.

Notable theatrical performances include *MARRIAGE OF FIGARO* (QTC) opposite Geoffrey Rush, Neil Armfield's *STUFF HAPPENS* (Company B); *PARRAMATTA GIRLS* (Company B), *THE STORY OF THE MIRACLES AT COOKIE'S TABLE* (Griffin Theatre, Malthouse Theatre, QPAC) Michael Attenborough's *WHEN THE RAIN STOPS* *Falling* (Almeida Theatre, London); and Bell Shakespeare's 20th Anniversary production of *KING LEAR*.

JILLIAN NGUYEN (Vi)

Jillian starred in Noora Niasari's debut feature *SHAYDA* opposite award winning Iranian actress Zar Amir Ebrahimi. She played the female lead in the ABC's flagship series for 2022, surfing drama *BARONS*. Other recent credits include romantic sci-fi feature *LOVELAND*, directed by Ivan Sen and co-starring Ryan Kwanten and Hugo Weaving, Kiwi comedy feature film *MILLIE LIES LOW* from director Michelle Savill, which

premiered at the 2022 Berlinale and THE CLEARING which will soon be seen on Disney+. Jillian also lends her voice to the role of “Arkie” in the upcoming animated show, SCARY GIRL, directed by Ricard Cussó & Tania Vincent.

Jillian appeared in Netflix series CLICKBAIT and in A MIRACLE CONSTANTLY REPEATED for Patricia Piccinini- part of an artistic installation piece at Melbourne's famous Flinders Street Ballroom during Melbourne's Rising Festival. She played Molly Kane in feature THE TRUE HISTORY OF THE KELLY GANG, directed by Justin Kurzel and based on the Booker Prize-winning novel by Peter Carey, as well as a key role in SBS original drama HUNGRY GHOSTS, a performance which garnered her much attention. She has appeared in several short films, including TÂM, also directed by Noora Niasari.

Jillian has trained at L'Ecole Philippe Gaulier and is a graduate of the 16th Street Actors Studio in Melbourne. She holds a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Media Communication, from The University of Melbourne. Born Huyen Dieu at Sungai Besi Refugee camp in Malaysia, both Jillian's parents are Vietnamese, with Chinese Heritage on her mother's side. She immigrated to Australia when she was 14 months old.

MOJEAN ARIA (Farhad)

Mojean's latest film SHAYDA opened the World Cinema Dramatic section of the 2023 Sundance Film Festival where he co-stars opposite 2022 Cannes Award Winner for best actress, Zar Amir Ebrahimi. The film is Noora Niasari's directorial debut and is produced by Vincent Sheehan, Noora Niasari and executive produced by Cate Blanchett.

In 2017, Mojean Aria became the first ever winner of the [Heath Ledger Scholarship](#) from a multicultural background. The illustrious judging panel consisted of Gary Oldman and Bruna Papandrea and backed by benefactors Michelle Williams and Nicole Kidman, among others.

Soon after, Mojean went on to star in the limited series DEAD LUCKY opposite Rachel Griffiths and played a pivotal role in the feature film DANGER CLOSE: THE BATTLE OF LONG TAN written and produced by Stuart Beattie (Pirates of the Caribbean). In early 2019, Mojean appeared in SEE, Apple TV+'s epic tentpole written by Steven Knight (Peaky Blinders), directed by Francis Lawrence (Hunger Games), produced by Chernin Entertainment (Hidden Figures) and starring Jason Momoa (Aquaman).

In early 2021, Mojean played the villain opposite Hugh Jackman's hero in Warner Brothers sci-fi, REMINISCENCE, written and directed by Lisa Joy (Westworld) and produced by Michael De Luca (The Social Network) Aaron Ryder (Arrival) and Jonathan Nolan (The Dark Knight). In 2022 Mojean released his first feature in a starring role THE ENFORCER with his co-lead being the legendary Antonio Banderas with a supporting cast of Kate Bosworth (21) prolific rapper 2Chainz, Zolee Griggs (Archenemy) and Alexis Ren.

Outside of acting, in 2020, Mojean initiated the first ever [scholarship](#) at the Australian Institute for the Performing Arts for young Middle Eastern / North African actors. Currently, Mojean has been an active supporter and on the frontlines of the Iranian “woman, life, freedom” revolution, most recently delivering a speech in front of 15 thousand people at a Los Angeles protest.

RINA MOUSAVI (Elly)

Rina Mousavi was born in Babol, Iran. At age 6, her family moved to Australia. Rina has trained at a number of Film and Television Acting Schools across Perth and Sydney and has previously spent 10 months training in Mixed Martial Arts for a film production.

She was able to showcase her MMA in her role as Michaels in ITCH, Season 2 (2021), available on BBC and ABC. Rina was also the Lead and Co-Producer of the Short Film, AVERSION (2020), Directed by Aaron Kamp, which won the WA Made Film Festival.

Her lead role in the short film THE GUNSLINGER (2021) has been accepted in 28 Festivals worldwide in which she was nominated for the Best Actress Award at the Atlanta Comedy Film Festival.

Rina is known for her lead role as Rose in ALEXANDER (2019), currently in 9 festivals including Fringe World Perth.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

NOORA NIASARI (Writer/Director/Producer)

Tehran born, Australian raised, Noora is a Writer/Director/Producer and Co-Founder of Parandeh Pictures. Her debut feature film, SHAYDA starring Zar Amir Ebrahimi and Executive Produced by Cate Blanchett – premiered in the World Dramatic Competition of the 2023 Sundance Film Festival where it won the coveted Audience Award and was sold to Sony Pictures Classics.

Noora initially studied architecture, but found herself irrevocably drawn to the power of cinema. She travelled the world; making documentaries in Wales, Lebanon, and Chile where she made CASA ANTÚNEZ, a film exploring the meaning of ‘home’ in the aftermath of an earthquake, nominated for the New Talent Award at the 2017 Sheffield Doc/Fest.

During her Masters of Film & Television at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA), Noora’s focus shifted inwards, to stories of her Iranian diaspora community. Her graduate short, THE PHOENIX (Simorgh) starred the acclaimed pre-revolution Iranian actor Manouchehr Farid in his first acting role in 35 years. Simorgh won the VCA New Voice Award, nominated for an Australian Director’s Guild Award and selected for the 2015 MIFF Accelerator Lab.

In 2015, Noora travelled to Spain where she was mentored by Iranian Master filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami, who remains an inspiration. In his workshop, she developed the idea for her Screen Australia funded short film WATERFALL, a cross-cultural, coming of age drama that competed at festivals worldwide including MIFF, Leiden & Rencontres Internationales du Cinéma des Antipodes. In 2020, Noora released her short film, TÂM a 12-minute one-shot thriller starring Jillian Nguyen, described by FILMINK magazine as “intense, visceral and thought-provoking.” TÂM competed at the 2020 CinefestOZ Film Festival, MIFF 68 ½, and Oscar Qualifying Flickerfest and St Kilda Film Festivals.

After SHAYDA comes RAYA - the second feature film in Noora’s trilogy about Iranian women. An adaptation of the Iranian-American novel RAYA by Mahsa Rahmani Noble, produced by Gary Foster of Krasnoff/Foster Entertainment and Kate Fenske of Sister, with FilmNation/UTA handling International Sales.

VINCENT SHEEHAN (Producer)

Vincent Sheehan is an award-winning independent film and television producer based on Gadigal land (Sydney). A co-founder of Porchlight Films, his feature film credits include MULLET directed by David Caesar starring Ben Mendelsohn, LITTLE FISH directed by Rowan Woods and starring Cate Blanchett and Hugo Weaving, THE HUNTER an adaptation of Julia Leigh’s acclaimed novel directed by Daniel Nettheim and starring Willem Dafoe and the adaptation of Craig Silvey’s best-selling novel JASPER JONES, directed by Rachel Perkins and starring Toni Collette, Hugo Weaving, Angourie Rice and Levi Miller.

Vincent was an executive producer on Cate Shortland’s feature film *Lore* and David Michod’s acclaimed debut feature ANIMAL KINGDOM as well as THE ROVER starring Robert Pattinson and Guy Pearce and Justin Kurzel’s adaptation of Peter Carey’s acclaimed Booker Prize winning novel THE TRUE HISTORY OF THE KELLY GANG starring George MacKay, Nicholas Hoult, Essie Davis and Russell Crowe.

In 2016 Vincent moved into television co-creating and producing THE KETTERING INCIDENT for Foxtel, an 8-part mystery drama series starring Elizabeth Debicki and Matthew Le Nevez. It won the SPA, AACTA and Logie Awards for best mini-series and the Special Jury Prize at Series Mania. He then produced the 6-part satirical drama OPERATION BUFFALO for the ABC, written and directed by Peter Duncan (Rake) starring Ewen Leslie, Jessica De Gouw and James Cromwell. Vincent recently produced two seasons of FISK,

comedian Kitty Flanagan's smash hit comedy series for the ABC. Winner of Best Comedy Series Mania and the highest rating Australian produced comedy or drama series in 2021.

Vincent's latest production is SHAYDA, the debut feature film from Iranian-Australian writer/director Noora Niasari will be the first feature production from his new venture Origma 45.

SHERWIN AKBARZADEH (Director of Photography)

Sherwin Akbarzadeh ACS is an Iranian-born, Australian-raised cinematographer.

In 2022, Sherwin completed photography on SHAYDA, directed by Noora Niasari, produced by Vincent Sheehan and executive produced by Cate Blanchett. Shayda screened at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival where it received the Audience Award in the World Cinema Dramatic competition.

Also in 2022, Sherwin shot the feature documentary THE GIANTS, a poetic biography of Australia's most iconic environmentalist Bob Brown, directed by Laurence Billiet and Rachel Antony for Matchbox Pictures.

In 2021, Sherwin shot the 6-part comedy-musical series STORIES FROM OZ directed by Max Miller for Australia's ABC TV. Other recent credits include feature documentaries CARBON (2021) and THE RECORD (2020).

Sherwin is the recipient of 14 ACS awards and a Shots Asia Pacific Silver Award for Cinematography. He is drawn to telling challenging stories, especially those which feature marginalized voices.

ELIKA REZAAE (Editor)

Elika Rezaee is an Award-winning LA-based film editor and director with experience in both fiction and non-fiction filmmaking. Originally from Iran, she left her homeland to pursue her dreams in Cinema at AFI's prestigious editing program, where she graduated with distinction. Ever since, she has edited more than ten feature films, which have premiered at such top-tier film festivals as Sundance, Tribeca, and SXSW, as well as airing on PBS. Her edited films are available on streaming services such as Amazon, Vudu, and Apple TV.

She recently edited SHAYDA, a fictive feature film about a young Iranian mother and her six-year-old daughter who find refuge in an Australian women's shelter during the two weeks of the Iranian New Year. SHAYDA premiered at Sundance 2023 where it won the Audience Award.

Other recent credits include NOTES, a narrative film she edited that is at the end of its post-production process. This film was the last film that Halyna Hutchins shot. NOTES is about a lonely piano prodigy who is forced to defer college to train for a piano competition in Europe, where she finds the costs of balancing art, friendship, love, and duty may be deeper than she thought.

LA SANDINISTA, a feature documentary, uncovers a watershed moment in history when a group of Nicaraguan women shattered barriers to lead rebel troops in battle and reshape their country. This film received the Jury Prize from SXSW and is a winner of São Paulo International Film Festival, Audience Award & New Directors Competition at the Washington DC Film Festival, Justice Matters Award, and ITVS grant.

Rezaee has received support from ISF National Film Grant and is a Karen Schmeer editing fellow. She is a member of MPEG, Local 700, and the ADE.

JOSEPHINE WAGSTAFF (Production Designer)

Josephine is a Melbourne based Production Designer with experience in both narrative and commercial film projects. Technically trained as a Structural Engineer and with a Masters of Architecture paving the way in to a career in film, Josephine has a rich technical understanding of building and making. With a passion for art and design, Josephine excels at crafting worlds that generate an effect and build life into a story.

Josephine took home Best Production Design on a Commercial at the Australian Production Design Guild Awards 2022 and has previously won for the APDG Best Design on a Short Film (2016). Her work has screened at Sydney Film Festival, Flickerfest, St Kilda Film Festival and Melbourne International Film Festival.

In 2022, Josephine designed the feature film, SHAYDA. Written and directed by Noora Niasari, produced by Vincent Sheehan (Origina 45) with executive producers Cate Blanchett and Andrew Upton (Dirty Films), SHAYDA premiered at the Sundance film festival in January 2023 taking home the Audience Award in the World Cinema Dramatic Competition.

ZOHIE CASTELLANO (Costume Designer)

Zohie Castellano is an Australian Costume Designer who grew up in the wild nature of Wathaurong Country. She trained in theater design at the prestigious Victorian College of the Arts 2009 graduating with a high distinction and a commonwealth scholarship.

Her distinctive and evocative sensibility lead her production and costume designing her first feature film HAIL by director by Amiel Courtin-Wilson, which premiered at the Venice Film festival 2011, and won many accolades including 'The Age Critics Award' for Best Australian film 2012 and a nomination for Best Production Design from the Film Critics Circle of Australia 2012. Zohie continued to further develop her craft by costume designing two operas for The Melbourne Opera Company, THE MERRY WIDOW and CARMEN to great critical acclaim, and short films such as DUMPY GOES TO THE BIG SMOKE by Mirrah Foukles and SMALL MERCIES by Rhys Graham, which premiered at Berlinale 2014 as part of THE TURNING feature film premiere, where Zohie also participated in the renowned Berlinale Talents.

Other credits include, production and costume designer for feature films FELL by Kasimir Burgess, and AKRA by Devin Horan, costume designer for feature film LOCUSTS by Heath Davis, costume supervisor for TRUE COLOURS series 1 which aired on SBS 2022, and costume supervisor for GALORE by Rhys Graham which premiered at Berlinale 2014. Zohie also costume designed the feature film MEASURE FOR MEASURE directed by Paul Ireland, where she earned an AACTA nomination for Best Costume Design 2020.

Most recently she collaborated with director Goran Stolevski on his sophomore feature film OF AN AGE which premiered at Melbourne International Film Festival Opening Night Gala 2022 and won the CinefestOz 'Best Australian Film' award 2022.

ANOUSHA ZARKESH (Casting Director)

Established for over 25 years, Anousha Zarkesh Casting specializes in top end Australian TV and film. Based in Sydney, our casting agency has gained a reputation for a specialized service championing cultural diversity. We take pride in casting for a wide range of genres including political satire, drama, comedy, telemovies, documentary series and film. An example of some of our recent productions include: THE STRANGER, FIREBITE (AMC), CLASS OF 07 (Amazon) TOTAL CONTROL 1 AND 2, MYSTERY ROAD SERIES 1, 2 AND 3, (TV) RAKE (TV), REDFERN NOW (TV), CLEVERMAN (TV), THE PRINCIPAL (TV), INXS NEVER TEAR US APART (TV), CATCHING MILAT (TV), PETER BROCK STORY (TV), 800 WORDS (TV), BLACK COMEDY (TV), JASPER JONES (FF), HOUNDS OF LOVE (FF), MANNY LEWIS (FF), ALEX AND EVE (FF).

Anousha has recently cast THE NEW BOY (Warwick Thornton's feature), ONE NIGHT (Motive, Fifth Season, Paramount +), THE OFFICE (Amazon, BBC and Bunya) and TOTAL CONTROL 3. Last year 2021, Anousha won the AACTA Casting Award for Best Casting in Feature Film for HIGH GROUND. This year Anousha won 4 x CGA awards for Best Film – WE ARE STILL HERE, Best TV Drama – BALI, Best Comedy – PREPPERS and Best Achievement in Casting – THE AUSTRALIAN WARS. She was also nominated in the 2022 AACTA for Best Casting – THE STRANGER. She is Vice President of the Australian Casting Guild and Vice President of Screen Illawarra.

Presentation Credits:

SCREEN AUSTRALIA
PRESENTS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
THE 51 FUND

VICSCREEN

MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL PREMIERE FUND

DIRTY FILMS

PARANDEH PICTURES

AN ORIGMA 45 PRODUCTION

Main Cast:

ZAR AMIR EBRAHIMI

OSAMAH SAMI

MOJEAN ARIA

JILLIAN NGUYEN

RINA MOUSAVI

INTRODUCING
SELINA ZAHEDNIA

AND LEAH PURCELL

End Credits:

Written and Directed by
NOORA NIASARI

Produced by
VINCENT SHEEHAN
NOORA NIASARI

Executive Producers

CATE BLANCHETT
ANDREW UPTON
COCO FRANCINI

Executive Producers
CAITLIN GOLD
LINDSAY LANZILLOTTA
NAOMI MCDUGALL JONES
NIVEDITA KULKARNI
LOIS SCOTT

Executive Producers
GABRIELLE STEWART
TOM GRIEVSON

Director of Photography
SHERWIN AKBARZADEH ACS

Editor
ELIKA REZAAE

Production Designer
JOSEPHINE WAGSTAFF

Costume Designer
ZOHIE CASTELLANO

Casting Director
ANOUSHA ZARKESH

Sound Designer
LIVIA RUZIC

Hair and Make Up Designer
SELENA PERTZEL

CAST

Shayda ZAR AMIR EBRAHIMI
Mona SELINA ZAHEDNIA
Joyce LEAH PURCELL
Vi JILLIAN NGUYEN
Jill ALANNA HA QUACH
Jenny AVINA HA QUACH
Cathy BEV KILLICK
Renee LUCINDA ARMSTRONG HALL

Lara	EVE MOREY
Tobias	LUKA SERO
Hossein	OSAMAH SAMI
Farhad	MOJEAN ARIA
Elly	RINA MOUSAVI
Parviz	SHAYAN ASKARI
Maryam	ZOHREH FARID
Mrs Bagheri	TINA KHABAZIAN
Roya	ASAL DARAM
Interpreters	SEPIDEH FALLAH GHAZAL GHAZANFARI
Baby Dylan	OONA LUX NELSON-MOORE
Annabelle	HANNAH MOORE
Miranda	CATHERINE GLAVICIC
Deb	NICOLE GULASEKHARAM
Pierre	JEROME MEYER
Renee's Men	CHRISTOPHER DIMATTINA LIAM MCCARTHY
Female Waiter	TIANA HOGBEN
Stall Owner	FARIBORZ PAKZAMIR
Shopkeeper	MARJAN MESBAHI
Iranian Husband	KAMRAN MOTAMEDI
Iranian Wife	SHALIZ HOSSEINI
Iranian Mother	NASIBEH IRANI
Iranian Son	ABAN QAJARNIA
Drummer	RAYAN ARIDI
Fire Jumpers	BEHROUZ HARVASI SARAH HARVASI
Male Onlookers	MUSTAFA AMIRI AURNAB AS-SABER FAOUZI DAGHISTANI
Festival Dancers	YAZDANEH GALT ELHAM BAGHBANI NEGIN EMAMGHOLI
Mr Bagheri	MOHSEN PANAHI ERDI
Bahar	SABRINA SANAVANDI
Reza	EHSAN BAYATFAR
Elly's Party Guests	ZAC GARMSIRI NAFISEH HAMIDI MOHSEN HASHEMNEJAD PORSHA GHORBANPOUR FOROUZAN GHORBANPOUR
Police Officer	PHILLIP MCINNES
Firefighters	IOPU AUVA'A

Prison Guards	MELEAH SMEDLEY MICHAEL ROBINS SUBRA VELAYUTHAM SILAS JAMES
Line Producer	LAURA FAULKNER supported by VicScreen
Associate Producers	ANWYN WATKINS KEIRAN WATSON-BONNICE
Script Editor	LYNNE VINCENT MCCARTHY
Production Coordinators	ADAM PORRETT RICHARD HELDER ALLISON HARDING
Production Secretary	PETER FRITH
Production Assistant	RAPHAELA LOCHERT
Runners	POLAT YAZGAN REBECCA SMALL MONTY CALLEN AINSLEY HALBMEIJER NICHOLAS SMITH
Line Producer Consultant	NAOMI MULHOLLAND
Script Supervisor	GUY STRACHAN
Director's Assistant	ASAL DARAM
Financial Controller	LAURA FAULKNER
Production Accountants	KELLI BEAUCHAMP SUSAN HOGG
Post Production Accountant	HOLLY SALMONS
Assistant Accountants	KATIA NIZIC RICHARD HELDER
First Assistant Director	JAMES SHORT
Second Assistant Director	MATTHEW ROOKE
Third Assistant Directors	BLAKE FAIR MATTHEW WATERS
Additional First Assistant Directors	JASON FAULKNER ADAM NOEL MATT HARRIS

Additional Assistant Directors	MICHAEL MCLEAN BRETT O'MARA JAMES MILES MATTHEW GODDARD KIRRILY FRIGO SAMEED RABBANI MAHALIA BROWN JULIAN PITRONE PETER FRITH
Child Acting Coach	ASAL DARAM
Children's Tutor/Chaperone	SUZANNE SANDOW
Mona Stand In/Picture Doubles	ALIYA LAKSMANA AN'E STOJCEVSKI OLIVIA SMITH
Extras Casting Coordinator	CATHY COLE
Community Casting Coordinator	MAHVEEN SHAHRAKI
Community Liaison	SHAHIN MOVASSAT
Cultural Consultant	NASIBEH IRANI
Location Managers	LUKE FORD JAMES CAMERON
Location Consultant	JACOB MCINTYRE
Location Coordinators	PATRICK FAULKNER LEWIS KENNEDY
On Set Locations	RILEY SUGARS
Location Scout	MARCIA ROBINSON
First Assistant Camera - A Cam	CORYDON ANDERSON
Second Assistant Camera - A Cam	SARA RICUPITO
Video Split Operator	MJ JAMES
Additional 1st ACs	JASON MORLING LISA CUSHING
Additional Video Split Operator	SARAH PETRASIUNAS
Additional Camera Assistant	MONTY CALLEN
2nd Unit Director	KEIRAN WATSON-BONNICE
2nd Unit Camera Operator	GABRIEL FRANCIS
2nd Unit Focus Puller	OLIVER GROSS
Sound Recordist	LYNNE BUTLER
Boom Operator	TIM SMITH
Boom Operator - 2nd Unit	JACK PENDER

Additional Boom Operator ROBERT ROGERS

Gaffer TOMMI HACKER

Best Boy MICHAEL HALES

Third Electrics RAIN FLAVELL

Additional Electrics HAN PALMER

PETER RYAN

Key Grip ED BARLOW

Best Boy Grip ANTHONY TARANTO

Additional Grips DANIEL MUDRINIC

RYAN FISH

JUAN LOBO GONZALEZ

ADAM VITOLINS

BIRRIN KING

MARK KUPENGA

SAMANTHA DAVIES

MARK BROWN

Rigger GRANT FLETCHER

Action Vehicles Coordinator ROB PRUSA

Action Vehicles Assistant AEN SAALFIELD

Precision Drivers MARKY LEE CAMPBELL

AMANDA GRAVER

ADAM KANNGIESER

PAUL REID

Low Loader Operator RICHARD ALLARDICE

Unit Managers KIM FREEMAN

MEL BARBER

Additional Unit Managers JOHN HAGAN

DONNY BATTEN

Additional Unit Assistants CHAMEEN SENARATNE

JULIAN PITRONE

DYLAN WARREN

LUIS ARNET

Art Director MANDI BIALEK-WESTER

Senior Buyer/Dresser SAMANTHA DAGOTT

Buyers/Dressers GRANT HAYE

SABINE KURZ-FEYL

Art Department Runners IRANY TURRAL

CASPAR CONRICK

Property Master	JENNIFER MCAULIFFE
Props Buyer	GIGI HARBRIDGE
Standby Props	CHARLIE O'BRIEN
	GREGORY WEBB
Assistant Standby Props	CASPAR CONRICK
Art Department Attachment	MORWENNA SCHENCK supported by VicScreen
Art Department Intern	MILLA SIEVERS
Clearances Coordinator	KAIIT MOSBY
Graphic Artists	VERONICA JARAMILLO ANNA MCEWAN
Art Department Casuals	ATOOSA MONAZAMI GRANT GOULD TIANA LIOULIOS TERESA PISCIONERI AOIFE MURRAY ROJERIO ALMEIDA LIAM LINLEY
Cockatoo 'Romulus' Handler	LAUREN SELLWOOD
SFX Supervisor	CLINT DODD
SFX Technicians	JESSICA DODD TONY HALL JARED WILKINSON
Costume Supervisor	KEELY ELLIS
Costume Buyer	ALICIA AULSEBROOK
Costume Cutter	KAY ELISABETH
Costume Knitter	ISABELLE RUDOLPH
Costume Jeweller	SAYEH ALIZADE
Costume Standbys	JULIE BARTON MISHA TSAI
Costume Attachment	KATHERINE NOLAN
Costume Additional	HELEN CROATTO ELLEN STANISTREET JOSEPHINE MAYNARD ELENI MODINOS VICTORIA O'NEILL BRYAH JAHARI
Shayda's Jewellery	TEMPLE OF THE SUN
Mona's Necklace	SAYEH JEWELLERY

Hair and Make Up Artist CARMEN MORETTI
Additional Make Up Artists LAURA PUNTERI
KAT BARDSLEY
HELEN MAGELAKI

Safety Supervisor CHRIS WILSON
Additional Safety Supervisor JOHN FOX
Stunt Coordinators RUSSELL FROST
PUVEN PATHER
Shayda Stunt Double ZOË AMANDA WILSON
Assistant Stunt Coordinator NATHAN JAMES
Nurses LEAH JURY
JULIA JERKOVIC

Intimacy Coordinators EVE MOREY
RAMA NICHOLAS
On-set Therapists ESEN UYGUN
TANYA NEATE

Choreographer SARAH COOK

Farsi Translation KAMRAN BEHZAD
YAZDANEH GALT

Script Coordinator DAVID MORRIS

Stills Photographers SARAH ENTICKNAP
JANE ZHANG
NICOLA BELL
NEIL PRIETO

Gallery Stills Photographer BEN KING

Travel Services REELS IN MOTION
TONY MILES

Camera Equipment PANAVISION
Managing Director GREG LLOYD

Catering by G'DAY CHEF

Production Office ELA ROSE STUDIOS, FAIRFIELD
Thanks to EMILIO ELA ROSE
SHARON MAGRI

Post Production Facility BLUE POST

Managing Director	PETER MILLINGTON
Post Production Producer	FIONA FRY
Post Production Co-ordinator	SARA LEVY
Finishing Editor	MARCUS HERRICK
Additional Finishing Editor	KA-YIN KWOK
Conform Editor	EMMA BLACK
Avid Support	NEIL WOOD
Datacine Technician	DANIEL BOWSER
QC Supervisor	BEN DENBRAVE
VISUAL EFFECTS BY	BLUE POST
Visual Effects Producer	PHIL VINCENT
Visual Effects Supervisor	TOBY ANGWIN
Visual Effects Artists	SAM GRAMMER ADAM JONES
VISUAL EFFECTS BY	FUTURE ASSOCIATE
Visual Effects Supervisor	LINDSAY ADAMS
Visual Effects Producer	CAROLINE ADAMS
On Set Visual Effects	STUART WILLIS
Visual Effects Production Coordinators	ALEX BARNES BRAXTON DALEY
Compositors	REECE MULLEY JOMAREE CORONEL AHMED AMARI
FX	JASPER GARSKE
VISUAL EFFECTS BY	VERVE VFX STUDIO
Executive Producer	JOHN PRAKASH
Additional Visual Effects	MARK WILLIAMS
Post Production Supervisors	STELLA DO ROB SARROFF
1st Assistant Editors	PETER J BENNETT BELLA WALKER
VFX Editor	MATTHEW WIGG
Colourist	EDEL RAFFERTY
Titles Design	KOUROSH BEIGPOUR
Music Supervisor	KATE DEAN

Post Production Sound Services ANOTHER ROOM WITH A VU
Sound Designer and FX Editor LIVIA RUZIC
Dialogue Editor JUSTIN LLOYD
Mixer KEITH THOMAS
Foley Recording GERRY LONG
Additional Sound Editing FRANK LIPSON
BRUCE FINDLAY

Mixing Facility ALCHEMY SOUND

Post Production Script REEZY MILLER
Closed Captioning MAL TAYLOR, CREATE MEDIA ACCESS

Subtitling ASAL DARAM

Script developed by Porchlight Films
Development Executive COELI CUTCLIFF

Legal Services marshalls+dent+wilmoth lawyers
BRYCE MENZIES
MIET ENGELHARDT

Insurance Broker GALLAGHER
JESSICA QUICK

Tax Services NAGLE ACCOUNTING
TONY NAGLE

Production Auditor SEAN DENHAM & ASSOCIATES

Public Relations FALCO INK.

Completion Guaranty provided through
First Australian Completion Bond Company Pty Ltd

For Dirty Films

Partners CATE BLANCHETT
ANDREW UPTON
COCO FRANCINI
Vice President GEORGIE PYM
Development Coordinator ANGELA WU
Executive Assistants EVE SWAYLAND AND JULIE DUFFELL

For HanWay

President	PETER WATSON
Head of Acquisitions	MATTHEW BAKER
Director of Marketing and Distribution	TEJINDER JOUHAL
Production and Finance Executive	IVAN KELAVA
Head of International Sales	NICOLE MACKEY
Director of Business Affairs	TRACEY MCCARRICK
Director of Sales	MARTA RAVANI
Head of Legal and Business Affairs	TATIANA WAIT

For Madman Entertainment

PAUL WIEGARD, MICHAEL MATRENZA, NICOLE TITHERIDGE