



Back in December 2012, a jury committee which comprised the two award-winning directors, Ziad Doueiri (Lebanon) and Raja Amari (Tunisia), as well as renowned writer, poet and journalist Wael Abed Al Fattah (Egypt), evaluated 69 projects received during AFAC's open call for

Introduction

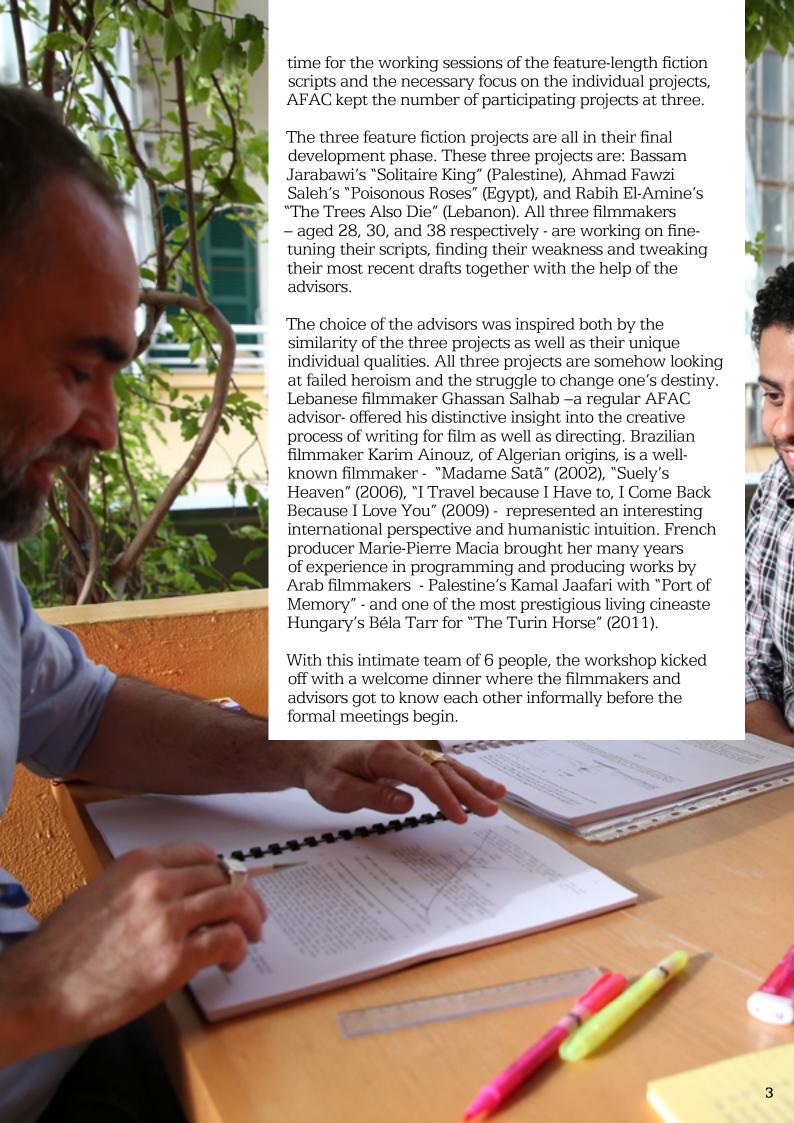
the annual General Grants for Cinema. A total of 12 film projects were selected

to receive the grants. The jury concluded their meeting with the following points: there's a clear presence of strong ideas among the grantees; there is a lack of writing skills in some cases which is hindering the scripts' development; there is a need for screenwriting training workshops in the Arab world.

AFAC has taken on the jury's recommendation of establishing a scriptwriting workshop for the Cinema grantees. AFAC had already conducted six workshops as part of its special programs - the Arab Documentary Film Program (ADFP) and the Crossroads program – and so it is not a far stretch to offer professional support to recipients of the general grant too. The first workshop for feature fiction films benefiting projects awarded in the annual General Grant for Cinema was thus held between May 28th and May 30th, 2013, a Scriptwriting Consultation Workshop for the 2012 Cinema projects.

AFAC's workshops target filmmakers (and producers) who had received grants for their projects with the aim of providing them with professional support in specific gap areas. They involve a number of seasoned film professionals that act as advisors, particularly for less experienced filmmakers, which make up most of the grantee pool. Through consulting closely with the jurors committee, communicating regularly with the grantees, staying abreast of the major developments pertaining to their projects as well as listening to and learning from their needs and challenges, AFAC is able to design a properly tailored training program.

The scriptwriting consultation workshop for the 2012 Cinema projects took place in Beirut, where an advisory program was implemented with the help of a team of advisors, coming from different cinematic and geographical backgrounds. In order to allocate an appropriate amount of



One month before the workshop, projects' files (synopses, treatments, existing visual material, and samples of filmmakers' previous works) were sent to the advisors to allow for in-depth analysis during the meetings. One-on-one meetings constituted the bulk of the program as it proved to be the most beneficial component of the previous workshops held by AFAC. Over a three day period, each of the

two-hour session twice with each of the three advisors. There would also be group meetings and case studies. Participants

Program

participating filmmakers would have a

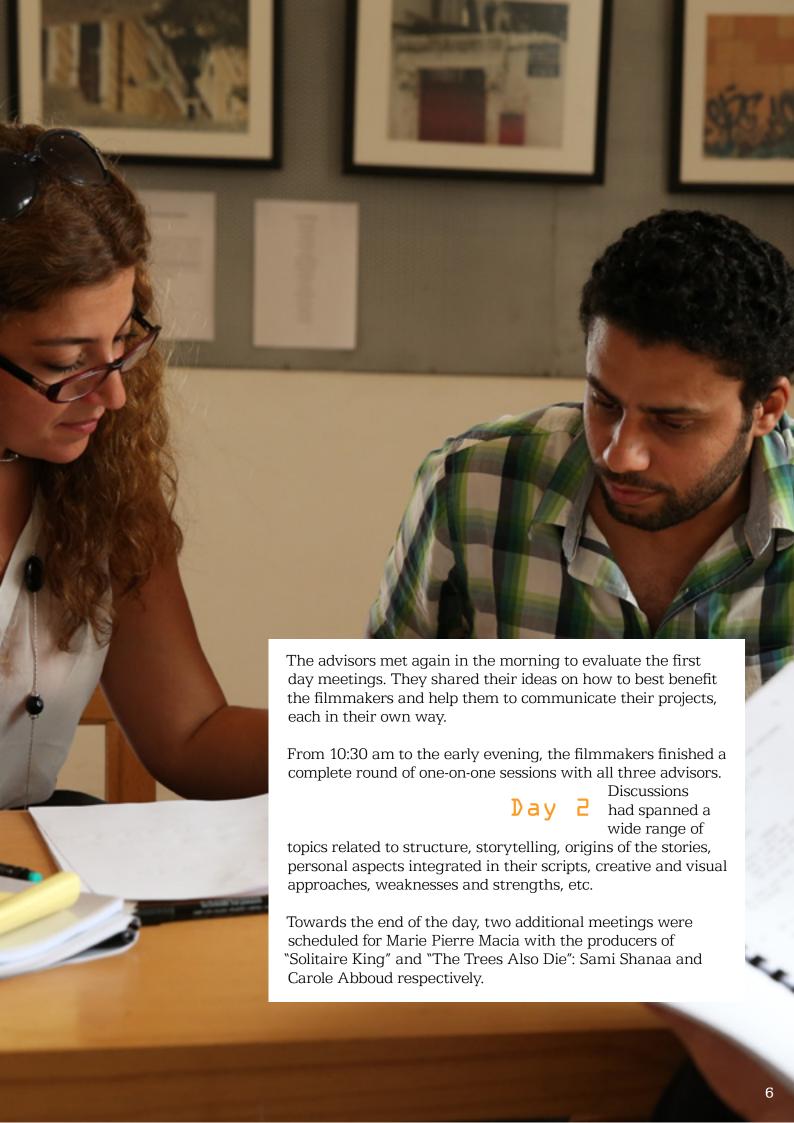


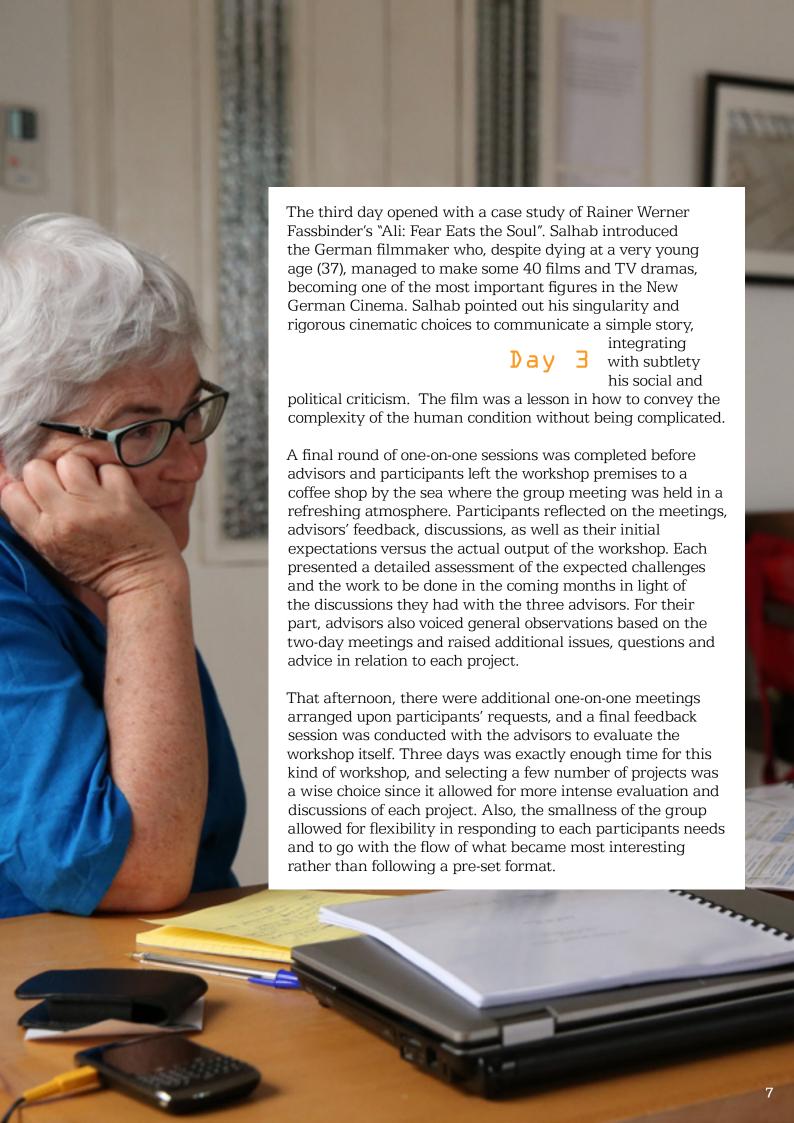


visual and artistic approach to their topics. It was also a time for questions and comments among each other regarding the different styles and attitudes observed towards making the films. The aim of this exercise was not only to acquaint the participants with each others' projects, but also to give them the chance to explore ways of how to best represent their works in words. The advisors were keen on eliminating any element of "pitching", and were rather looking for an answer from each of them to a sole question: Why do you NEED to make this film?

One-on-one meetings followed and occupied the entire afternoon. It was like therapy for filmmakers, as each struggled to express the places where their scripts were facing difficulty. The first day concluded with a screening of a film by Karim Ainouz, "Suely's Heaven". It was his second feature film and it proved to be an inspiring choice because it is a character-driven film, as are the three projects at hand. Karim's words after the film screening, as he told us about events and 'moods' that were going on behind the scenes and on the set, without any fear of exposing the film's vulnerability, really hit a chord with the young filmmakers. He generously shared with us all the risks and the decisions that changed along the way, laying bare the evolving process of filmmaking.

That day during dinner, the filmmakers were feeling less burdened and more inspired. They started to mingle more easily, with passionate debates and urgent questions coming up and discussed within the group, setting the tone for the next day's extensive one-on-one sessions.







Participating Projects

Project Title: Poisonous Roses Director: Ahmad Fawzi Saleh

Producers: Eman Hemeda, Karim Aitouna

Country: Egypt

Saqr is a handsome man from the slums of the tanneries where he has lived and worked all his life. He dreams of escaping. He is torn between his love for his sister, who lives with him in the tanneries, and his wealthy girl-friend who can take him out of his world. The story is told from the point of view of the three main characters.

Project Title: Solitaire King Director: Bassam Jarabawi Producer: Sami Shanaa Country: Palestine

"Solitaire King" follows Ziad, a 30-year-old Palestinian political prisoner, after his unexpected release from solitary confinement in Israeli custody. After 13 years in jail, Ziad is blindfolded and bound, by bus, for home. Ziad's perception of reality is overcome by his fantasies, his last resort for survival.

Project Title: The Trees Also Die

Director: Rabih El-Amine **Producer:** Carole Abboud

Country: Lebanon

Shaza, a young mother of a10 year old boy, flees the city with her son and goes searching for a place to bury her husband. They stop for the night in an isolated house where they come across Wadad and Rachad. The night becomes an eternity and the four characters retreat gradually into their memories and their fears. Meanwhile, a war is raging outside.



Advisors' Profiles



Marie-Pierre Macia (France)

After majoring in Literature, she worked at the Cinémathèque Française in Paris, at the American Film Archives as a researcher, and spent a decade programming the San Francisco International Film Festival. Between 1998 and 2002 she was the head of the Directors' Fortnight in the Cannes Film Festival. She's the artistic director of Crossroads, the co-production forum of the Thessaloniki Festival, and a co-founder of the company MPM Films.



Ghassan Salhab (Lebanon)

Born in Dakar, Senegal. In addition to making his own films, Salhab collaborates on various scenarios in Lebanon and in France, and teaches film in Lebanon. He has directed four long films: "Beyrouth Fantôme" (selected by Trois Continents/ Nantes 1998 and various international film festivals), "Terra Incognita" (selected by Sélection Officielle/«Un Certain Regar» - Cannes 2002), "The Last Man" (selected by « Cinéastes du Présent» - Locarno 2006, Montpellier, Torino, Tribeca, "Tous les cinemas du monde" – Cannes 2007...), and "1958" (selected by FID Marseille, Locarno, MEIFF Abu Dhabi...), in addition to numerous short films and videos, including "(Posthume); Narcisse Perdu; My living body, my dead body"; "La Rose de personne". He has also published his texts and articles in various magazines.



Karim Ainouz (Brazil)

Karim Aïnouz is a Brazilian-Algerian filmmaker and visual artist, presently living and working in Berlin. He holds a degree in Architecture from the University of Brasilia and in Cinema Studies from New York University. He then enrolled in the Program of Independent Studies of the Whitney Museum of American Art. Aïnouz's feature debut, "Madame Satã", premiered in 2002 at the Cannes Film Festival's Un Certain Regard. His next films, "Suely in the Sky" and "I Travel Because I Have To, I Come Back Because I Love You" (codirected with Marcelo Gomes) premiered in the Venice Film Festival's "Orizzonti", in 2006 and 2009 respectively. His short films include "Paixão Nacional" (1996) and "Seams". (1993). His installations have been shown at the Whitney Museum of American Art Biennial (1997) and the São Paulo Biennial (2004).