A close-up, low-angle shot of a woman's face, tilted back and looking upwards. She is wearing a dark red headscarf with a blue and gold floral pattern. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue. The title 'barzakh' is written in a white, lowercase, serif font on the left side of the image.

barzakh

برزخ

written and directed by  
karina dandashi



barzakh: (Arabic: برزخ )

1. a word meaning “obstacle”, “hindrance”, “separation”, or “barrier.”
2. a veil or a curtain which lies between two things, preventing them from meeting each other.
3. limbo; a state of in-between.





## SYNOPSIS

Living in a dystopian future where the U.S. government is sending refugees and undocumented immigrants to a newly colonized Mars, a Syrian refugee misses her deportation launch and makes a musical connection with a local DJ.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

As a Syrian-American Muslim writer and director, BARZAKH is a personal film that uses the Sci-Fi genre to reflect upon the sociopolitical climate in the United States and the treatment of refugees and undocumented immigrants. In this dystopian world, “illegal aliens” are being deported by the government via rocket ship to the newly colonized planet, Mars.

In Arabic, “al-barzakh” means a physical barrier that separates two things, or a spiritual state of in-between. Much like my own Syrian family who had to flee to other countries during the war, Zahra is stuck where she is not wanted. She cannot go forwards into an uncertain future, and she cannot go back into the past of living in Syria. Only through song is she able to connect to a deeper sense of self, whether it's through techno beats that act as a bridge to an all-American DJ, or a lullaby from her homeland that speaks her truth.

Barriers are everywhere. Between mother and daughter, between a Syrian refugee woman of color and a white American DJ. Between Zahra's home/reality and the disco/fantasy. The only thing that seems to not have a barrier is music. Though the world will continue to create barriers and borders, art offers (as techno music does in the film), the hope, the glimpse, to permeate them.





**Karina Dandashi** is a Syrian-American writer and director living in Brooklyn, NY. She graduated from New York University and has since worked in freelance film production. Karina is passionate about women-driven stories that explore identity through the intersection of family, religion, and culture in Arab and Muslim communities. Karina is the Spring 2020 Silver Sun Diverse Voices Filmmaker Fellow at the Jacob Burns Film Center, where she will make two short films through 2021.

## DIRECTOR'S BIO

## PRODUCER'S BIO

**Natalia Rivas** works at Cinetic Media, a talent management, content sales, PR, marketing, and strategic advisory company for the media and entertainment industries. She's part of the sales team, which sells/packages films and series. She also works with Cinetic's joint venture company, Brand New Story, a full-service content advisory firm that helps brands like NYT and Nat Geo to create and distribute impactful, premium, longform entertainment. Natalia also enjoys freelance producing and is passionate about producing social impact stories that bring stories of women and people of color to the forefront.





## DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY'S BIO



Ward is a Syrian filmmaker and DP who came to the United States to pursue his passion. He's worked on award winning films and music videos, and spent the last part of the year training at 1stAveMachine, a global commercial production company boasting clients like Target, Facebook, IBM and Adidas. As an immigrant, Ward hopes to support and contribute to the importance of BARZAKH's message, which he believes has never been more relevant.

# MAIN CAST

Nadia Dandashi - **Zahra**  
Kayleigh Shuler- **Jenna**  
Samar El Zein - **Mama**  
Yan Yufit - **Baba**

# CREDITS

**A film by:** Karina Adriana Dandashi  
**Produced by:** Natalia Rivas

**Director of Photography:** Ward Kamel  
**Production Designer:** Christina O'Neill  
**Sound Mixer:** Tyler Warren  
**Boom:** Carley Santori  
**Gaffer:** Luc Ung  
**Assistant Camera:** Idil Eryurekli  
**2nd Assistant Camera:** Yasmeen Jawhar  
**Grips:** Michael Parry  
**Line Producer:** Sid Tilokani  
**1st Assistant Director:** Ingie Enan  
**Production Assistants:** Caroline Flynn,  
David Huang, Lijie Xie

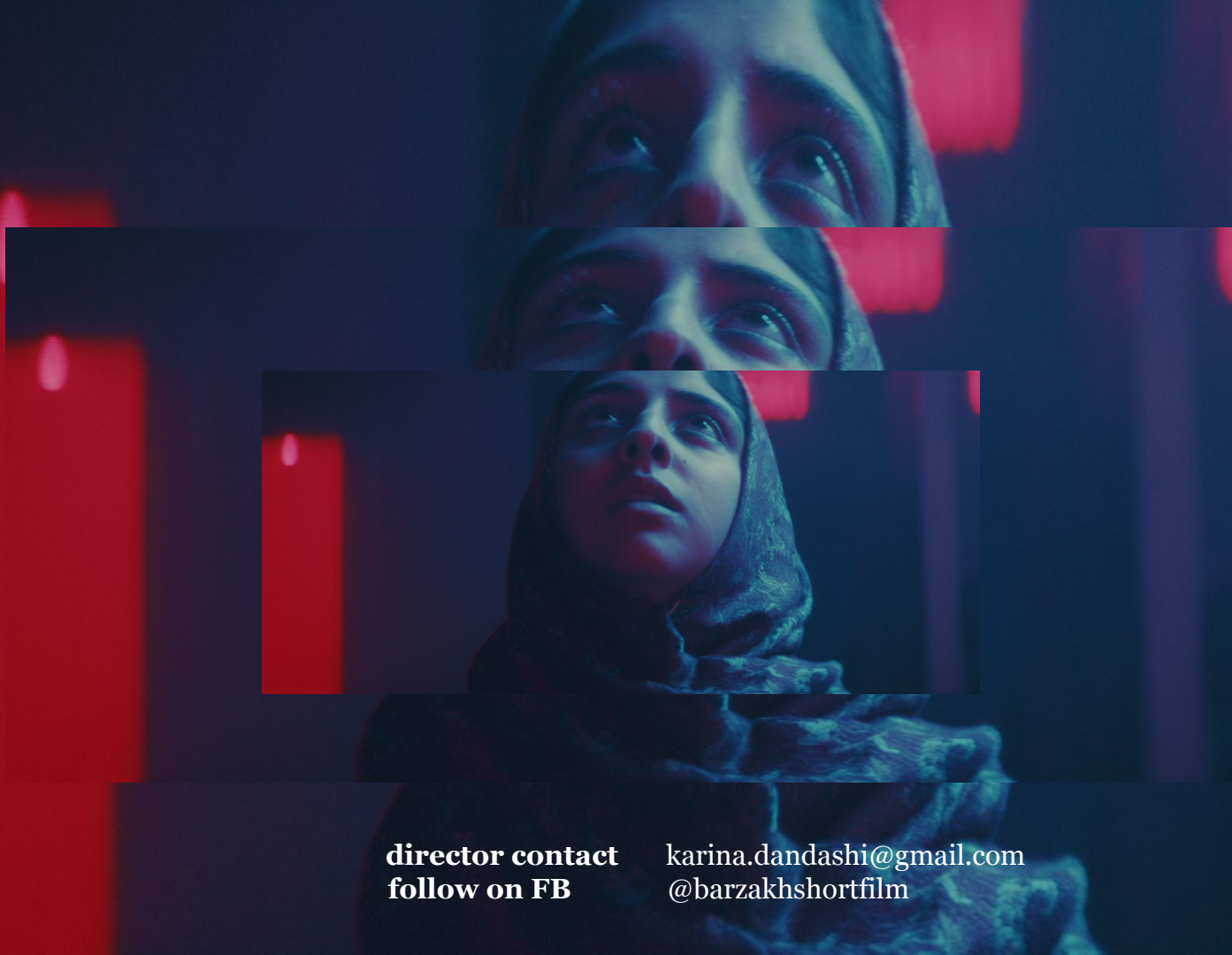
**Editor:** Bea Young  
**Re-Recording Mixer:** Max Phillips  
**Composer:** Wake Island, Jake Orlin  
**Colorist:** Alexia Salingaros  
**Graphic Designer:** Sam Ferguson

# SPECIAL THANKS

Sam Ferguson  
Moutaz & Adriana Dandashi  
Samer Al-Dandashi  
Maria Conroy  
John Conroy Jr.  
Karl Weiss  
Aya Hamdan  
Olivia Gazzarrini  
Antonio Salume  
Friends and Lovers (Brooklyn)

United States | 10 minutes | 2020 | Color | English | Arabic





**director contact**  
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[@barzakhshortfilm](#)