

EITR a film by Fateema Al-Hamaydeh Miller

CAST:

Mohamed played by Mostafa Shaker



Mostafa Shaker is a comedian, writer, actor and producer based out of Vancouver, BC who started his career in Cairo, Egypt as a theatre actor and on-stage performer. Growing up in the theatre, he's acted in more than 20 productions both in Canada as well as Egypt. Notable plays include: A Comedy of Tenors, Cats the Musical & Beauty and the Beast. Mostafa has also acted in over 30 independent short and feature length Canadian films, including Is This A Date, winner of best comedy at the 2020 Florence Film Awards. He studied acting at the Vancouver Film School and is represented by PRINCIPALS talent.

Lloyd played by Guled Abdi



Guled Abdi is a Comedian, Actor, Writer and 1/4 of the multi award-winning sketch troupe TallBoyz II Men. He is also a Co-Creator and Series Lead of the award-winning television series TallBoyz (CBC)! Guled has performed at OFF-JFL, Montreal Sketchfest and the Toronto Fringe Festival just to name a few. He is also a talented writer, having contributed to several development projects including television series for Husk Media and Corus Entertainment. You can see Guled in the highly anticipated reboot of The Kids in The Hall (Amazon), or at random bars you didn't know had a comedy show.

Marwa played by Hamsa Diab Farhat



Hamsa is the Founder & Executive Director for Taste of the Middle East, a not for profit organization established in 2018. The organization's mission is to celebrate Canadian Middle Eastern music, art, and cuisine in Toronto. After leading two successful festivals, the Taste of the Middle East Toronto Festival has become a signature event for and by the Middle Eastern community in the GTA, demonstrating a high potential to draw attendance from well beyond the city limits. She also recently founded a social media blog called Blog Middle East Toronto which aims to be Toronto's source for anything middle eastern: music, art, culture, restaurant reviews, event listings & the best in the city! She holds a business marketing diploma from Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology & is always updating her

marketing skills by attending industry special workshops. She is a member of Tourism Toronto and Festivals & Events Ontario. Along with Eitr, her acting credits include *The Truth* (2018), *Zahra's Faces* (2022) and *Hysteria* (2022).

CREW:

Writer/ Director Fateema Al-Hamaydeh Miller



Fateema is a Palestinian/ Canadian filmmaker based in Toronto. Her work explores fragmented identity, isolation and connection through a lens of grounded "oh no, should I laugh?" comedy. Fateema's background in improv and clown greatly influences her writing/directing process as she strives to create with integrity, depth & a sense of humor. Fateema is particularly passionate about writing nuanced and humanizing representations of Arabs and Muslims for the screen and creating space for marginalized voices

both in front of and behind the camera. Her short film *Feeling Fine* was awarded Best Actor in a Short Film at the Berlin Indie Film Festival and has screened at festivals from Saskatchewan to Australia. She is currently workshopping her feature film *Waves/‘Amwaj* which has been developed through Cinephilia Productions writer's workroom under acclaimed Lebanese-American filmmaker Darine Hotait and in the Women in the Directors Chair Career Advancement Module. Fateema believes in resilience and resistance through laughter and embraces comedy to explore the pains and joys of being human.

Producer Farah Abdo



Farah Abdo is a Filipina Palestinian producer based in the GTA. After graduating from Centennial College's Broadcasting and Film Program she produced multiple TV spots, web commercials and short films. She produced the short *A Lonely Afternoon* which premiered at Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival and won the Programmer's Choice Award at Bali International Short Film Festival. Her next project is a thriller short film which she co-wrote entitled *Knock, Knock*.

Director of Photography Issa Shah



Issa Shah is a Muslim, Pakistani-Guyanese cinematographer and camera operator, and affiliate member of the CSC. His visual style, crafted over 10+ years in the industry, is unique to each project; drawing inspiration from the story and emotional state of its characters or individuals.

Issa's work ranges from commercials, narrative and documentary. Issa strides to tell impactful stories that can help bring social and political change across the world.

Issa's latest feature, Queen Tut, tells the story of an Egyptian teenage boy who moves to Canada and finds comfort in a community of drag queens. The film was produced by Fae Pictures and directed by Reem Morsi.

Telling stories of humans with experiences unlike our own, Issa hopes to encourage deeper unity and human connection.

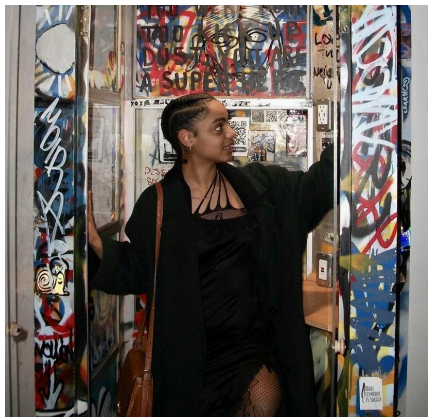
He believes although we may come from different perspectives, we share the same struggles, the same joys, and the same world.

Issa's skills were honed during his early years of his career while working at SubPac and Toronto International Film Festival. At both companies, Issa produced, shot and edited in-house content with prolific names in the music and film industry. Issa has carried on working with companies such as HBO, CBC, OutTV, Lululemon, Warner Music, TikTok, OVO and XO.

Over the summer of 2021, Issa was part of the first CSC mentorship program where he was mentored by documentary filmmaker, Nicholas DePencier. Since then he had the chance to work with him as a 2nd Unit DOP on the CSA nominated series, Summit 72.

Issa has worked with notable clients such as; HBO, CBC, OutTV, Lululemon, Warner Music, TikTok, OVO and XO.

Production Designer Maria Al Sa'di



Maria Al Sa'di is an Omani Qatari freelancer based in Tkaronto. She is focused on Production Design. Al Sa'di has worked on a variety of projects ranging from commercials, short films, features and Episodic TV. Her designs are deeply character driven and showcase fully-realized worlds within every frame. Maria is always dancing and frequently overdressed, she likes it that way.

Composer Suad Bushnaq



Hailed as an ‘incredible artist’ by the legendary Hans Zimmer upon hearing her orchestral music, Suad Bushnaq is an internationally acclaimed, multi award-winning film and concert music composer whose versatile style spans a number of genres, and whose music, described as ‘reflective and touching’ by the BBC, has moved listeners to their core. With more than 40 film credits to date, she scored award-winning features & shorts that screened at festivals like Locarno, Hot Docs, Edinburgh, Dubai, and Clérmont -Ferrand to name a few. Suad was competitively selected for the Festival de Cannes ‘Spot the Composer’ programme, and the SESAC film scoring residency in LA where she was mentored by A-list composer Christophe Beck. Be it orchestral, atmospheric, or minimalist, Suad’s distinct sensitivity to picture and love for cinema make her an in-demand composer

who ensures that each film gets its unique identity through the score. Ethnically speaking, Suad is a dual Jordanian-Canadian citizen of Bosnian, Syrian, and Palestinian roots. She is based in Toronto but can be found traveling the world.

Suad won the Hollywood Music in Media Award-Exceptional Instrumental Performance for her Orchestral piece ‘Tomorrow’, and was nominated for the same awards in 2019: Short Film Live Action Score for A Very Important Appointment, and 2018: World Music for The Road to Jenin. She won the Beyond Music Foundation Creativity Award (2019 by Grammy-laureate Larry Klein), won the Artemis Women in Action Film Festival Award (2019 Best Foreign Score), won Best Original Score for the feature film Jasmine Road at the Fine Arts Film Festival of the Venice Institute of Contemporary Art in LA, & won the Arab Fund for Arts & Culture grant for her album 'Soundtracks from Independent Arab Cinema' (2019). In 2022, Suad was nominated for a Canadian Screen Award (the Canadian equivalent of a BAFTA or César) for her original score for the feature film Jasmine Road by Warren Sulatycky, and won the Best Original Score for ‘Incorrigible: The Story of Velma Demerson’ at the Hollywood North Film Awards. She was also selected in that same year as the recipient of the 2021 Kathleen McMorow Music Award; a merit-based award presented once a year to a Canadian composer by the Ontario Arts Foundation. She was competitively selected for & completed the Canadian Film Centre Slaight Music Residency, as well as the Krakow Film Music Festival SynCamp.

Her orchestral music was performed by the Belgian National Orchestra, Vermont Symphony, the National Arab Orchestra, Friedenauerkammerensemble, Luneburg Symphony, & the Syrian Expat Philharmonic (of which she’s a composer in residence) to name a few, in venues like Konzerthaus Berlin, Philharmonie Berlin, BOZAR, Malmo Live Konserthus, & Elbphilharmonie. In 2021, her 20 minute cello concerto, Sampson's Walk on Air, commissioned by the Vermont Symphony Orchestra and performed live at the Flynn Center for the Arts, received a five minute standing ovation from all 1400 audience members in attendance. Her instrumental music was performed in Finland, Norway, Hawaii, Jerusalem, & Carnegie Hall. She brought some of her film scores to the concert stage. She was commissioned by Betty Productions (London Olympics

2012) to compose music for the UAE 48th official celebration, which was recorded by the London Symphony & played at a huge audio-visual show in December 2019 with 30K attendees.

She earned a scholarship & holds a Bachelor in Music Composition from Canada's top music school, McGill University, & studied at the Higher Institute of Music in Syria. She gave film-scoring lectures & workshops in schools, universities, & festivals in the US, Canada, & Oman, & moderated panels for the DOC Institute & the Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television.

Editor Naseem Loloie



Naseem Loloie is a Toronto-based Picture Editor with experience working on feature films, short films, television series and documentary productions. A graduate of Queen's University's Stage and Screen program and Humber College's Post Production program, her work spans across several genres; from Netflix's action hit Vikings: Valhalla, to CBC Gem's comedy series True Dating Stories, to the CSA-nominated romantic drama Querencia. Her narrative and documentary shorts have been awarded and screened at festivals like the Canada Shorts Film Festival, Toronto Black Film Festival, Kingston Canadian Film Festival and Yellowknife International Film Festival. Naseem is passionate about the power of visual storytelling and hopes to continue collaborating with talented creators!

Graphic Designer Heba Tarek



Heba Tarek was born in 1999 in Cairo and is an Applied Arts graduate. Heba is a vibrant artist and graphic designer that experiments with collage art mainly as a form of storytelling and self expression that can be inspired from all aspects of life like music , Pop Culture, everyday experiences she goes through . Her form of art allows her to get her point across by focusing on creating art where her feelings and values are embodied in a creative and fun way hoping that others can see life through her eyes.

She also participated in various group exhibitions at Cairo Art fair in 2020 and 2021, Daydreaming and artists of tomorrow exhibition in TAM Gallery as well as Cairo prints 2021 and 2022 and finally Midnight exhibition at l'appart Cairo 2022.

Jafar Sandouk Musician



Jafar Sandouk is a British-Iraqi musician, composer, and record producer based in Canada. He is the singer and guitarist for Howlin' Circus, a rock'n'roll outfit merging heart and soul with a fuzzy, Eastern-inspired psychedelic blues rock sound. With his band Jafar has performed live on national television, received radio airplay and performed tours across North America and Europe. Eitr is Jafar's first film project and showcases his talents across a diverse range of musical styles and instruments.

Tara Moneka Musician



Tara is a singer from Iraq whose style ranges across cultures and languages. She has an all women's band called "Dijleh" with professional multi-cultural players that supports women and talking about women's rights. Tara is from Baghdad, Iraq. She became a well known singer in early age 12 years old after she participated in The Voice Kids and did many festivals in Iraq. She studied music for 7 years and has collaborated with different institutions, organizations and collectives including; Aga Khan Museum, the Koerner Hall, Fabcollab "Women in a Song", Umanotaculture, Moskittobar, MixTO, Moneka Arabic Jazz, Lula Launch, The Opera House of Toronto, Jamii Festival, Lemon Bucket Orchestra, and more. Tara's goal is to share

different types of music with people, to be multilingual and to represent the diversity of the world.

Executive Producer Lauren MacKinlay



Lauren MacKinlay is a Creative Producer at Neshama Entertainment, where she contributes to the creative development & production of tv series, feature films, and non-theatrical features. Previously, Lauren spent nearly a decade with Canadian production company Sphere Media, where she served as the Supervising Producer of the medical drama TRANSPLANT (CTV/NBC), as well as Associate Producer for BAD BLOOD (Netflix), THIS LIFE (CBC), and 19-2 (CTV/Acorn). She is also one of the cofounders of Women On Screen, a non-profit organization that advocates for gender parity in the film and television industry.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES:

- EITR had about a year-long prep process where writer/ director Fateema Al-Hamaydeh Miller slowly put together a team of core creatives whose identities were reflected in the story and who deeply resonated with the film. This team dedicated so much time and passion into the project before going to camera and poured their hearts into every last detail of the film- from creating custom Arab Kitsch posters, to planning for the most soapy camera angles to sourcing catering that supported local Arab businesses.
- One of the biggest obstacles for our team was finding a location to shoot in. Fateema went to (she swears) every perfume warehouse in Toronto and surrounding area and finally got a yes from a Muslim family owned business that has been running for 20+ years in Mississauga, Ontario. We shot the film on Father's Day weekend in 2022 and the owner of the perfume shop closed his business for the day and sold perfume out of his car in the parking lot so we could film. His catchphrase for the day was "you are all my daughters!" Such a supportive dad!
- This film is deeply inspired by the Arab soap operas and old Egyptian films my Taita (grandmother) would always have playing in the background when I was growing up. These Ramadan Soap Operas of the 90s and early 2000s as well as Egyptian films of the Golden Era of Arab cinema in the 1940s and 50s are magic to me. I loved the contradiction of my fairly traditional and religious Muslim family bending the rules when it came to indulging in this media that often pushed the boundaries of conservative Muslim values. Especially old Egyptian films! They are so racy! These movies were even censored in the USA at the time because of all the kissing. Inspired by this contradiction, I decided to use a visual language that is deeply steeped in nostalgia and the celebration of Arab culture and imagine Queer Arab Joy inside of it.
- The name of the film "Eitr" is what happens when you put the Arabic word عطر (pronounced ah-tr) through Google translate. I loved this. First of all, so much of the film for me is about mistranslation and disconnect between immigrant parents and first generation kids of the diaspora when it comes to expressing identity. I love that the "English translation" of this Arabic word can't quite be captured phonetically, that there is a glitch in this transfer. As well, the word عطر doesn't just mean perfume, in Arabic it holds more meaning as someone's specific scent or essence. This lost-in-translation-ness and inability to capture the holistic meaning of a word across languages really speaks to me as a person with a fractured Arab identity and a longing and fumbling desire to connect with the Arabic language and my Palestinian roots. Eitr also stands for Elephant in the Room, like Mohamed's Queer Identity. PERFECT right? AND in Norse Mythology, Eitr is a liquid substance that is the origin of all living things. LAYERS.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS:

Mohamed: Trapped in the monotony of his facade of heteronormativity, Mohamed struggles to meet the expectations of his grieving mother while attempting to carry on the torch of his father's beloved business.

Lloyd: Grounded, embodied and standing in his truth, Lloyd has worked hard to get where he is and has lost a lot along the way. Grieving his complicated relationship with his recently passed father, Lloyd is grappling with how to find closure and accept their relationship for what it was.

Marwa: Trying to take care of her son in the best way she knows how while processing the loss of her husband, getting Mohamed married is the last box Marwa needs to tick off her list to make sure that everything will “be okay” and also so that she can finally go on her dream cruise.

KEY MESSAGES & THEMES:

Queer SWANA joy & liberation. Immigrant parent & first generation child relationships. Religion & queerness. Grief & loss. The mask of masculinity.

TAGLINE:

Can Mohamed turn this One Man Show into a Two Man Show?

LOGLINE:

A closeted Arab wholesale perfume seller, attempting to mask his identity with excessive amounts of Polo Sport adjacent cologne, is knocked off centre when a charming customer sees through his act.

SHORT SYNOPSIS:

Grinding away at the inherited family business, Mohamed works tirelessly making sales of knock-off perfume while living as a knock-off version of his true self. Grappling with the recent loss of his father, his mother's anxious attempts to get him married and the shadow of his hidden Queer identity, Mohamed finds solace and connection in a day spent with a beautiful stranger who lives in self-acceptance and sees Mohamed for who he truly is under the many layers of polo-sport-adjacent cologne.

LONG SYNOPSIS:

Grinding away at the inherited family business, Mohamed works tirelessly making sales of knock-off perfume, while living as a knock-off version of his true self. His doting mother Marwa brings him lunch everyday and sets up chay dates with potential romantic interests (and their families) what seems like every night.

Inside this monotony, Mohamed is lying to himself about his sexuality and leaning into the mask of masculinity in order to maintain the expectations of those around him. But in reality the biggest expectations of how he should be are set by himself.

Then the monotony comes to a screeching halt, when an unexpected charming customer enters his shop. Mohamed shares a connection with this beautiful stranger who lives in self-acceptance and who truly sees him underneath the many layers of cologne.

In Eitr, Mohamed's fear of his true desires will be tested as he is caught off guard by the power of being seen. But can this connection break him out of his performative shell, even for a lingering moment? Eitr explores queerness in the context of Arab culture and family structure, queerness in relationship to grief as well as what leads to the secret worlds that we build for ourselves and how we share them with others.

SOCIAL MEDIA HANDLES:

Instagram

Fateema Al-Hamaydeh Miller (Writer/Director)- @fateemasaurus

Farah Abdo (Producer)- @abdofarah_

Issa Shah (DP)- @issashahdp

Maria Al Sa'di (Production Designer)- @mirapose

Suad Bushnaq (Composer)- @musicbysuada

Naseem Loloie (Editor)- @nloloie

Mostafa Shaker (Mohamed)- @itsmostafashaker

Guled Abdi (Lloyd)- @gul3d

Hamsa Diab Farhat (Marwa)- @hamsadiabfarhat

Augusto Bitter (UPS Guy)- @augustobitter

PRODUCTION COMPANY LOGO:



FUNDERS TO BE CREDITED:

Canada Council of the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, CUE Fund for Marginalized Artists, Inside Out RE:Focus Fund, Company3.

BTS:



