Blasters

every self deserves a stage...
runtime
genre
format
languages
12 mins
drama
16mm · VHS
english · turkish

# logline

Manhattan, 1983. Tasked with helping her father run his deli on the night of its 24/7 opening, an unassertive teenager distracts herself with dreams of superstardom, while a few blocks away her idol, David Bowie, embarks on his first tour in five years.

# short synopsis

Manhattan, 1983. Moon, an unassertive Turkish-Korean teenager, is forced to help her father run their family-owned deli on the night of its 24/7 opening. A few blocks away, Moon's idol, David Bowie, embarks on his first tour in five years. Over the course of a hot summer's night, inspired by Bowie's ability to transform into wide-ranging versions of himself, Moon contends with her desire for reinvention by reveling in fantasies of her own superstardom.

# medium synopsis

Manhattan 1983. Teenager Moon is tasked with helping her father, Baba, run his New York deli on the night of its 24/7 opening, while a few blocks away, her idol, David Bowie, embarks on his first tour in five years.

Born to a Turkish father and an absent Korean mother, Moon is struggling to find her place in the world. Her alienation is heightened by ads which are narrow-minded in their promotion of female beauty. By contrast, Moon is inspired by Bowie's ability to shape-shift into endless different personas.

As concert-goers drift in and out of the store, Moon contends with her desire for reinvention by reveling in fantasies of her own superstardom. The television becomes her portal to another world, a different self. She imagines what it would look like if she were beloved and admired.

In this alternate reality, Moon is a bold and polished star, capable of dazzling all. On stage, she performs a song. It is visceral and enchanting, a bittersweet ode to the conflicting selves we all carry around within us. Soon, however, it is day again, and there is lots to do at the grocery store.

# directors' statement

*Blisters* is a coming-of-age story about cultural inheritance and belonging. Set at the intersection of the real and the imagined, delivered in a mix of English and Turkish, our short film examines one day in a teenager's life that proves formative to her self-worth. A bittersweet portrait of girlhood, set in 1980s New York, *Blisters* draws a parallel between the commercial pressures that shaped adolescence 40 years ago and the way in which social media influences it now.

To create a textured and period-accurate portrait of the era, we engaged in several months of historical research, accessing a wide range of photographic and moving-image archives. In an ode to the '80s, we shot *Blisters* on Kodak 16mm film, including a sprinkling of VHS footage and a selection of curated archival clips in our opening sequence. During the shoot, we recorded sound on analog tapes, and during post-production we composed our score using instruments from the era.

Our relationships to our heritage and homelands inspired the making of *Blisters*. Having experienced the clash of cultural differences and the existence of language barriers first-hand within our own families, our hope was to use our main character's journey as a vehicle for examining what being an outsider can feel like, and how the experience of alienation can provide loneliness and freedom in equal measure.

# alia wilhelm

## producer, co-writer & co-director

Alia Wilhelm is a Turkish-German writer, collage artist and filmmaker working in the genre of autobiographical, coming-of-age fiction. Inspired by her multicultural heritage and a childhood during which she moved often, she is interested in examining what it feels like to be an outsider, both within and beyond our own families. Working across moving image, collage and the written word, she is passionate about themes such as transience, cultural inheritance and belonging. Whatever the medium, Alia uses visual and historical research to create soulful work with a handmade and nostalgic feel, shooting on film or sourcing archival footage for her moving-image projects and using magazine cut-outs and family albums to craft her handmade collages. When she is not working on self-initiated projects such as *Blisters*, Alia works in film, television and advertising as both a producer and visual researcher. Most recently, she was the Co-Producer on Alejandro G. Iñárritu's *Digger*. She has also worked on productions directed by Wes Anderson, Lena Dunham, Danny Boyle and Andrea Arnold. *Blisters* is her first short film.

# callie keels ju

## co-writer & co-director

Callie Keels Ju is a Texan filmmaker and photographer whose work is as intimate as it is unique. She is passionate about themes such as cultural identity, complex family dynamics, and the exploration of self-worth in a world of differing values. Stylistically, her work strikes a balance between traditional feminine aesthetics and darker cinematic tones, a dichotomy true to who she is. Callie spent years in the art department of major indie films, honing her visual skills on everything from *The Featherweight* and *Shortcomings* to Josh Safdie's Oscar-nominated debut, *Marty Supreme*. Callie balances her career in film with fashion and portrait photography and has had her work featured in print and online publications, including Glamour, i-D and Allure magazines. Currently, she is working as a producer's assistant on A24 x Hulu's upcoming original series, *The Spot*. *Blisters* is her second short film. Her first short, *Ttal*, is currently in post-production.

# adam kolodny

***director of photography***

Adam Kolodny is a cinematographer based in New York City. His work spans the gamut of the visual world, including narrative, documentary, commercial, fashion and experimental filmmaking. Whether shooting analog or digital, Adam strives to convey the truth of the story being told. Every creative choice – be it lensing, framing or lighting – is made in service of the collaborative experience of visual storytelling. Most recently, Adam was the director of photography on *The Featherweight*, which premiered in competition at the 80th Venice Biennale. He has also worked on the second unit of a number of HBO and Showtime documentary projects and a slew of music videos for bands that he loves. His short films have premiered at film festivals such Sundance, SXSW, Tribeca and Raindance.

# farah jabir

***line producer***

Farah Jabir is a Southeast Asian, South Asian and Arab independent and commercial filmmaker based in New York. She is most called to humanistic stories centering on people on the fringes of society, and communal filmmaking outside of linguistic, genre and geographic limitations. Farah is a fellow at Film Independent's Producing Lab, as well as an alum at Mentorship Matters (Amazon/Sony), The Thousand Miles Project (UCP) and the Asian-American Stories of Resilience program (PBS/A-Docs). Her credits include premieres at Tribeca, SXSW, Chicago and Raindance. Her most recent short film *Kasbi* had its world premiere at the 2024 Tribeca Film Festival and was shortlisted for a Sony Future Filmmaker Award.

Official Selection
NewFilmmakers
Los Angeles
SEMI-FINALIST
TiSFF Shorts & Docs
* Thessaloniki,
GREECE
2026
OFFICIAL SELECTION
Twin Cities
Film Fest
2026
OFFICIAL SELECTION
El Paso
Film Festival
2026
AYVALIK
ULUSLARARASI
FiLM FESTiVALi
2026
DIRECTED BY
WOMEN
TÜRKİYE
BIFA
KINO
LONDON
SHORT FILM FESTIVAL
SEMI-FINALIST
2026
Official Selection
DOKUKIDS
:DOKU
FEST
2026
HONORABLE MENTION
Greenpoint
Film Festival
2026
SEMI-FINALIST
Flickers' Rhode
Island International
Film Festival
2026
SILVER SCREEN
OFFICIAL SELECTION
FILM ON FILM
2026
OFFICIAL SELECTION 2025
MARYLAND
FILM FEST
Official Competition
kuki.18
Young Short Film
Festival Berlin 2025
MONTCLAIR
FILM
FESTIVAL
2025 Official
Selection
OFFICIAL SELECTION
AESTHETICA
SHORT FILM FESTIVAL
2025
OCFF 2025
Official
Selection

# credits

MOON
AINUR ZHANIBEK

BABA
ISA CAMYAR

JAY JONES
RYAN KNOWLES

TOOTHPASTE TEAM
REBECCA LAUREN
EDDIE DATZ
CALEB HAFEN

BOWIE FANS
THEA HENRY
PARKER BROWN
JASON YANTO

NEW YORKERS
ZAIAH ELLIS
SARAH MURRAY
JOSHUA KOSHY
TINA AMIRAH
MICHAEL JAMES MCGORY
ZEYNEP AKSEL
OTIS REIMERS
ALIA WILHELM

DIRECTED BY
ALIA WILHELM & CALLIE KEELS JU

WRITTEN BY
ALIA WILHELM & CALLIE KEELS JU

PRODUCER
ALIA WILHELM

LINE PRODUCER
FARAH JABIR

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY
ADAM KOLODNY

PRODUCTION DESIGN
ERIN LASORSA & TAYLOR BARRY

COMPOSER
KERIM WILHELM

EDITOR
KATE PEDATELLA

HAIR & MAKEUP ARTIST
HANNAH LAUREN DEL ROSARIO

COSTUME STYLIST
MERVE ELTEMUR

CASTING DIRECTOR
RAMONA JINGRU WANG

LOCATION MANAGER
JAMIE LASORSA

BTS PHOTOGRAPHERS
JAMES DE LEON
RAMONA JINGRU WANG
NUR GUZELDERE

FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
EMILY COHN

SCRIPT SUPERVISOR
BRENNA POWER

PRODUCTION SERVICES
SER NOCTURNA
ARIELLE FRIEDMAN
CAMILE GRIMALDI

KEY PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
AVI BHAYA

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS
MARC IOSIF
JALEEL HILLS

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
ARZU ORAN

COLLAGE ARTIST
ANDREA LUX

TOOTHPASTE AD ILLUSTRATOR
ALIINA KAURANNE

TITLE & CREDITS DESIGNER
MELEK ZERTAL

ART DEPARTMENT ASSISTANTS
HILARY EDEN
JAMIE HORTON
REX MORADFAR
MICHELE MOSES
JACLYN SKURIE

ARCHIVAL RESEARCHER
CHRISTINA BARTSON
ALIA WILHELM

1ST AC
LOGAN QUARLES

2ND AC / LOADER
WILL JONES

GAFFER
DAVID WILLIAMSON

KEY GRIP
KIERAN MCSHANE

SOUND MIXER
MARIYA CHULICHKOVA

ASSISTANT SOUND
CARA HUNTER

KEY HAIR STYLIST
CAYLEN CARA

AUDIO PLAYBACK
STEVEN JU

MOVEMENT DIRECTOR
BRIANNA RIVERA

SOUND DESIGNER
JACOB ZACHARIA

MUSIC RESEARCHER
ALEV KAYAGIL

VFX & ANIMATION
ALASDAIR WILLSON

COLORIST
NADIA KHAIRAT GOMEZ

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