



NEW DIRECTORS/NEW FILMS

OFFICIAL SELECTION

CAST

JAWDAT / **Razi Shawahdeh**

SALEM / **Basem Loulou**

MUHAMMAD / **Louay Noufi**

RANA / **Maysa Abd Elhadi**

CREW

DIRECTOR: Sameh Zoabi

DOP: Hichame Alaouie

SOUND: Olivier Hespel

SET DESIGNER: Nael Kanj

COSTUME DESIGNER:

Hamada Atallah

EDITOR: Simon Jacquet

SOUND EDITOR: Frédéric Fichet, H

Èlène Lamy au Rousseau

MIX: Gilles Benardeau

MUSIC: Krishna Lévy

Man without a cell phone

A film by **Sameh Zoabi**

Twenty-something Palestinian-Israeli slacker Jawdat just wants to have fun with his friends, talk on his cell phone and find love. Instead, he navigates unconvincing dates with Muslim, Christian, and even Jewish girls, and wrestles with the Hebrew college entrance exam.

Meanwhile, his curmudgeonly olive-farming father, Salem, is determined to drag Jawdat and his whole community into a fight against a nearby Israeli cell phone tower that he fears is poisoning the villagers with radiation.

As Salem's efforts to remove the tower disrupt Jawdat's precious cell phone reception, preventing any further communication with his potential girlfriends, Jawdat is forced to face the battle and grow up to be a man.



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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The inspiration for this story is grounded from personal experiences growing up as a Palestinian-Israeli; an experience that unconsciously births engaging and dramatic material. Twenty percent of Israel's citizens are Palestinians who live in segregated villages and towns throughout the country. Growing up, our own communities and schools are not integrated into the larger Israeli society. After high school, many young people flock to universities and the work place where they must interact with the larger Jewish-Israeli population for the first time.

Leaving home is a major transition and time of self discovery for young adults across all cultures, but it is particularly unique to Palestinian-Israelis, who come to realize their status as second class citizens with full force. In the media, the struggle for equal rights is overshadowed by the larger political milieu of the region, and is lacking in personal stories of everyday people.

The first time a film had been shot in my hometown, Iksal. People had not seen a movie crew this close before. With the support of all of my family and friends, the experience was, unquestionably, an emotional one. And in a "stranger than fiction" moment that proves films a reflection of reality, many of the people in the town did believe that the radiation from cell phone towers does cause cancer. So when we built a cell phone tower close to the village for the purpose of using it as part of the film set, the next morning we came to the set to find it fully

destroyed. People left signs saying "No more radiation and cancer." It turned out that some people thought it was a real cell phone tower... so we had to announce through the Mosque's speakers in the village, during Friday's prayer, that it was a part of the film set and it was not real... We were lucky that it happened during the pre production phase and not during shooting. In a way, it proved how accomplished our production team was in that our tower was constructed out of cardboard but looked that real.

As a filmmaker I feel the urge to tell stories about my own community and share these narratives with the world. While the political realities are, invariably, present in the film, the story ultimately reveals an upbeat and positive tone. *Man Without a Cell phone* explores all of the hopeful, frustrating, and hilarious moments that my community's' post-adolescent experience entails.

Sameh Zoabi's Biography

Sameh Zoabi was born in 1975 and raised in Iksal, a Palestinian village near the city of Nazareth, Israel in 1975. In 1998, Zoabi graduated from Tel Aviv University with a dual degree in Film Studies and English Literature. The following year, Zoabi was awarded a merit scholarship to pursue a Master's Degree. In February 2005, he completed his M.F.A. in Film Direction at Columbia's School of the Arts. Zoabi's previous short film "Be Quiet" (19 min.) is an international award winning film, including the Third Prize at the Cinefondation Selection at the 2005 Cannes Film Festival. Filmmaker Magazine named Zoabi as one of the Top 25 New Faces of Independent Cinema. *Man Without a Cell phone* is Zoabi's feature film debut.

Filmography

Man Without A Cell Phone, 2010

Be Quiet (short), 2006 (*Sundance IFF*, *Angers Film Festival*, *Clermont-Ferrand IFF*, *Cinefondation Award in Cannes 2005*)

Produced by

MEROE FILMS (France), LAMA FILMS (Israel), KANMAKAN FILMS (Palestine), VERSUS PRODUCTION (Belgium)

Supported by the Doha Film Institute — DFI — Qatar

France, Palestine, Israël, Belgium, Qatar / 2011 / 78 minutes / Color / 2K — 35mm / 1 :1,85

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