

GREEN BORDER



**DIRECTED BY
AGNIESZKA HOLLAND**



METRO FILMS in association with ASTUTE FILMS PRESENTS GREEN BORDER in co-production with BLYCK PRODUCTIONS MARLENE FILM PRODUCTION BELUGA TREE CANAL+ POLAND dFlights MAZOWIA WARSAW FILM FUND CZEKA TELEWIZJE with the participation of VOLAPUK ZDF/ARTE TRT SINEMA VOD-BEtv FEDERATION WALLONNE-BRUXELLES LA BANQUE POSTALE IMAGE 17 FILMS DOUTVOUE with the support of EURIMAGES CZECH FILM FUND CNC
STARRING ALJAL ALTAWI MAJA OSTASZEWSKA BEHI DIANATI ATAI TOMASZ WESLOK MOHAMAD AL BASHI DALIA NADUS LESZKA PAULINA KRAINIK P.C.B.C. with a voice of actress ANETA BRZODZOWSKA COSTUME DESIGNER KATARZYNA LEWINSKA PRODUCTION DESIGNER KATARZYNA JEDRZCZYK SOUND ROMAN OYMYN
MUSIC FREDERIC VERCHEVAL COSTUME DESIGNER PAVEL HRDOLICKA DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY TOMASZ NAUMIK EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MARIA BUCHARSKA-LACROIX DAMIEN McDONALD SARKA CIMBALOVA DIANA ELBAUM DAVID RAGONIS BEATA RYCKZOWSKA MALGORZATA SECK DOMINIKA KULCZYK EXECUTIVE PRODUCER MIKE DOWNEY
WRITTEN BY MACIEJ PISIK GABRIELA LAZARIEWICZ-SIECZKO AGNIESZKA HOLLAND PRODUCED BY FRED BERNSTEIN AGNIESZKA HOLLAND DIRECTOR OF COLLABORATION KAMILA TARABURA KATARZYNA WARZECHA DIRECTED BY AGNIESZKA HOLLAND





GREEN BORDER

A FILM BY
AGNIESZKA HOLLAND

2023 - Poland/France/Czech Republic/Belgium- Drama - 147 min

Language: Polish, Arab, English, French

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SYNOPSIS

In the treacherous and swampy forests that make up the so called “green border” between Belarus and Poland, refugees from the Middle East and Africa trying to reach the European Union are trapped in a geopolitical crisis cynically engineered by Belarusian dictator Alexander Lukashenko. In an attempt to provoke Europe, refugees are lured to the border by propaganda promising easy passage to the EU. Pawns in this hidden war, the lives of Julia, a newly minted activist who has given up her comfortable life, Jan, a young border guard, and a Syrian family intertwine.

30 years after *EUROPA EUROPA*, three-time Oscar Nominee Agnieszka Holland’s poignant new feature *GREEN BORDER* opens our eyes, speaks to the heart, and challenges us to reflect on the moral choices that fall to ordinary people every day.

CREW

A film by	Agnieszka Holland
In collaboration with	Kamila Tarabura and Katarzyna Warzecha
Written by	Maciej Pisuk, Gabriela Łazarkiewicz-Sieczko, Agnieszka Holland
Director of photography	Tomek Naumiuk
Editor	Pavel Hrdlička
Production Design	Katarzyna Jędrzejczyk
Costume Design	Katarzyna Lewińska
Hair&Make up Design	Aneta Brzozowska
Sound	Roman Dymny
Music	Frédéric Vercheval
Produced by	Marcin Wierzchosławski, Fred Bernstein, Agnieszka Holland

A Metro Films (PL) production in association with Astute Films (US)

Co-produced by Maria Blicharska, Damien Mc Donald - Blick Production (FR), Šárka Cimbalová - Marlene Film Production (CZ), Diana Elbaum, David Ragonig - Beluga Tree (BE)

In co-production with CANAL+ Poland - Beata Ryczkowska, Małgorzata Seck, dFLIGHTS - Dominika Kulczyk, Czech Television, Mazovia Warsaw Film Fund

In participation of Astute Films, Eurimages, Volapuk, ZDF/ARTE, CENTRE DU CINÉMA ET DE L'AUDIOVISUEL DE LA FÉDÉRATION WALLONIE- BRUXELLES, LA BANQUE POSTALE IMAGE 17, Films Boutique, VOO-BE tv, TRT Sinema, Downey Ink., Saudade Film

Executive producers Mike Downey, Jeff Field, Emir Külal Haznevi, Daniel Bergman

With the Support of Czech Film Fund, Aide aux cinémas du monde, CNC - Institut Français

CAST

Jalal Altawil	Bashir
Maja Ostaszewska	Julia
Behi Djanati Atai	Leila
Mohamad Al Rashi	Grandpa
Dalia Naous	Amina
Tomasz Włosok	Jan

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

More than 30 years ago, I made a film, EUROPA, EUROPA, about a Jewish boy who, to survive the Holocaust, first assumed the identity of a Stalinist communist youth, and then a soldier of the Wehrmacht and a student of an exclusive Hitler Youth school, becoming a young Nazi. It was 1989 and the Berlin Wall had just fallen. The double title was meant to express the duality of the European tradition: Europe of our aspirations, the cradle of culture and civilization, the rule of law and democracy, human rights, equality, and fraternity, but on the other hand, Europe as the cradle of the worst crimes against humanity, selfishness and hatred.

In 1989, the year of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the victory of Solidarity, it seemed that this first Europe was winning-but I always felt that the dark side was only lying dormant and could reawaken at any time.

Today-30 years later-we face a similar dilemma. The "Holocaust inoculation" has stopped working. The snake's egg has matured...

After World War II, Western countries understood that the right to asylum had to be a basic human right in order to integrate morally broken societies and respond to the challenges of inequality.

Respect for this right has been gradually eroding-even being disregarded completely in the European Union in recent years as it turns into a fortress while its enemies-like Putin and Lukashenko-use war and the misery of refugees fleeing conflict as a kind of hybrid weapon.

In the autumn of 2021, a wave of refugees from various countries (Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Congo) was lured by Lukashenko to the Belarusian border with Poland and Lithuania. Lukashenko's propaganda had made them believe that they would



easily be able to cross the border into the European Union and find themselves in a paradise, which is what wealthy, democratic Europe is for people tormented by wars, poverty and violence.

The Polish authorities, conveniently forgetting that they were dealing with living people, considered them hybrid missiles, spinning propaganda invoking threats, disgust and fear. They were not people seeking refuge in our country, but Putin's missiles attacking our sacred borders; a bunch of terrorists, pedophiles and zoophiles. Thus, the uniformed services had no problem with violating international law; the captured refugees, including women, the sick, children, and the elderly, were pushed back to Belarus, where torture, beatings, starvation, and rape awaited them, or they were abandoned in the "death zone", where the prospect was (and still is) death in the woods from hypothermia, starvation, or drowning in the swamps. The forest on the Polish-Belarusian border is one of the last primeval forests in Europe-both monumental and treacherous. The authorities cut the media and all humanitarian and medical aid off

from that one. Many Poles agreed with these methods, and the European Union did not protest either-happy that the problem was being solved without its involvement. But a large part of the local population and young activists, confronted with the suffering and fear of innocent people, reacted normally: these people must be helped.

The fate of these migrants, and the humanitarian catastrophe they were facing in a place less than three hours from Warsaw, moved me: I saw in their situation something poignantly symbolic and-perhaps-a prequel to a drama that could lead to the moral (and also political) collapse of our world.

Right now-as I write these words-the tragic war in Ukraine has been going on for months. The world, by the will of a single dictator, is facing the prospect of total change, a huge global threat. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian war refugees are crossing the Polish border every day. They are met with a huge wave of solidarity and help; both from the public and also from the Polish authorities, which were previously so reluctant to accept the victims of other humanitarian crises.

Poles are justifiably proud of their hospitality-and only a few ask why it is so selective and why Europe and its governments apply double standards to people fleeing war.

Once again, many refugees are wandering around the woods on the Polish-Belarusian border; once again being tortured, pushed back to Belarus, and dying.

The oppression of the activists rescuing them is getting harsher, and the behavior of the Polish border guards-the same ones who carry Ukrainian children across the border with tenderness and empathy-is becoming more brutal. This difference in the treatment of these two different groups of war refugees brutally exposes what we try to hide: our European racism.

The people and events we depict are not accompanied by the pathos of heroism and patriotism. The basic difference between the refugees in our story and those who are

crossing Ukraine's borders today is simple: the color of their skin. They have all been confronted with a choice none of them was prepared for, but which they have to face. The protagonists of the other threads of our story also face such a choice. The different points of view come together to create as complete a picture as possible.

I think that in their story, just as in a drop of water, our European duality is reflected- the duality I was thinking about when I gave my film the double title Europa, Europa 30 years ago.

Cinema is not completely powerless - it can show the truth about the world and human fate polyphonically, from different points of view. It can illuminate difficult human choices, helplessness, and the invisibility of some beings with the light of pathos and pull them out of the shadows. It can pose questions that we don't know the answers to, but by asking them we can make a little more sense of the world.

Politics and politicians determine our lives, but what interests me most is how their actions, choices and inactions imprint themselves on the lives of ordinary people and the choices they face.

That's why we took three very different perspectives to tell this story: those of a family of Syrian refugees, a young border guard, and an activist in spite of herself- a fifty-year-old woman who can't help but respond to the cries of those in need.

The script for The Green Border brings together these different fates and viewpoints, interweaving them strategically, and connecting them.

The cinematic style of the film is revealed in the mood board. The action will be told in a quasi-documentary style, with close-ups and a fast-moving camera that often trails closely behind the characters. But the moment the camera stops, the terror escalates, amplified by the light, turning the forest into an almost Gothic maze from the dark tales of the Brothers Grimm- Hansel and Gretel lost in the void of the woods; the sounds of

nature interrupted by the noises of menacing patrolmen/human-hunters; a horror-like atmosphere. The reality of the migrants, trapped in an increasingly hostile environment, takes on archetypal, sensual and mystical features. The veristic para-documentary realism meets and combines here with symbolism.

The film's narrative weaves together a few storylines, intercutting them with various points of view, then strategically separating them, only to reconnect them again. We'll try to be very specific, to capture the context and particular situations in a very precise, veristic way and-at the same time-to express some more general, more global and relevant truth about the contemporary world and its challenges.

The characters must be vivid and real, their journey emotionally fulfilling. We want to be close to them, to follow them, to care and worry about them.



INTERVIEW AGNIESZKA HOLLAND

"I HAVE LESS AND LESS TO LOSE"

What was your motivation for *Green Border*?

Agnieszka Holland: My generation of filmmakers felt that we were responsible for representing the problems of the world, and that it was necessary to talk about difficult topics and ask questions—not only existential questions, but ethical, social, and political ones. Critics dubbed this movement 'Kino Moralnego Niepokoju' - the Cinema of Moral Anxiety.

Polish cinema today—which in general I think very highly of—has somewhat turned its back on those kinds of questions. Is it because everything happens so quickly now? Or because the world is so complex that it's hard to pinpoint something truly important and worth paying attention to? It may be that artists are simply overcome by a feeling of chaos and see no way to grab hold of it. Or it might simply be because funding is so

hard to come by - and taking a clear position or speaking out on a controversial topic is a huge risk.

My feeling is that there's no sense in making art if you're not fighting to interrogate the important problems, the painful and at times unsolvable problems that force us to make difficult choices.

What inspired this subject matter in particular?

My friends found a body on the border. He was naked, frozen to death. This wasn't the first body they have found, but it's when I learned that when someone has hypothermia, they feel like they have a high fever and start taking off their clothes. And that image, of that young man freezing to death here in my country, right next door, there in the woods where people go walking their dogs and foraging for mushrooms, is something so horrible. In the face of this crisis manufactured by politicians, we must take a clear position—as artists, as people, as a society, and as a country.

Does it frighten you to work with challenging subject matter like this?

AH: I'm aware that I might elicit some very unpleasant reactions and misunderstanding from people, who, perhaps if they were to listen to what I'm saying, might actually understand. But in general, I'm not afraid. I wasn't afraid before, so I see no reason to be afraid now. I have less and less to lose, and more and more responsibility for what I must pass on.

From there, how was the script written?

AH: The script for *Green Border* was developed on my initiative and virtually every event described in it actually took place to some degree. My co-authors, Gabriela Łazarkiewicz-Sieczko and Maciej Pisuk, and I very carefully researched and fact-checked our sources. We spoke with people who were part of those events from every side of the barricade. But I'm not a documentarian; I make fiction films, and one must

allow for a certain generalization in my films, for metaphors and, well, for fiction, the kind of fiction that involves treating reality synthetically rather than just describing it.

Jalal Altawil, you play the father of a family of Syrian refugees, and you yourself are a refugee. Why did you have to flee your country?

Jalal Altawil: I fled Syria after the revolution broke out in 2011. I had taken part in demonstrations against the dictator, Bashar al-Assad. I was arrested even though we were demonstrating peacefully. I fled the country after receiving death threats multiple times. I made my way to Lebanon. Later, I was in Jordan, Egypt, and eventually Turkey.

I worked in a refugee camp until one day I once again felt that my life was in danger. In 2015 I sought asylum in France, and in fact, I received French citizenship a couple of days before the shooting began for *Green Border*. This period in my life, when I was a refugee, was one of the main reasons I took part in this project. I didn't have to imagine anything.

How did you feel on the set? It couldn't have been easy...

JA: In the refugee camp, I held workshops in psychodrama for children and women for about three years. This kind of theater involves casting victims in primary roles. We based it on the experiences of a given person, and the idea was to help victims heal their trauma. In *Green Border* these roles were reversed; this time I was in the role of the actor and Agnieszka was directing.

The emotional baggage I carry, my memory of leaving my country, my experience in the camps all helped me play my role and I was able to purge the pain by expressing it through my character. I very much appreciated this. For both Agnieszka and me, it was very important that the characters be true. We did rigorous research, constructing the backstory of Bashir's family in line with actual historical events. My character had dreamt of a better life for his family, or for what was left of it. They'd survived war, dictatorship, radical Islamists, and ISIS. They fled in order to survive, and they dreamed of getting out of the hell they were in.

Mohamad Al Rashi, you play the grandfather, and you too are a refugee. You had an impressive resume in Syria: actor, musician, theater performer, collaborations with eminent dramatists. Why did you have to leave that all behind?

Mohamad Al Rashi: There was a moment in my career when I had the opportunity to perform in Sławomir Mrożek's play *Emigrants*, and this moment became a turning point. Before *Emigrants*, I accepted the political situation in my country, just going along without realizing what was really happening. While working with Mrożek's text, I began to notice similarities between his words and the way things were in Syria. It was as if someone had turned on a flashlight and I could finally see the reality I was living in. As an actor I had little to do with the people on the street, but my role in *Emigrants* expanded my consciousness.

We were living under a kind of anesthesia administered by the regime, but the play awakened a premonition that Syria would soon explode. Before 2011, we thought of revolution as something romantic, impossible, we thought people would never dare take to the streets, things like that only happened in books.

Like Jalal, I immediately joined the demonstrations. One day we were at the funeral of a young man who had been killed during the protests, I shouted, "Long live Syria! Down with Bashar Assad!" and a video clip of the funeral immediately hit the internet. I received thousands of death threats against me and my family. I immediately left my home. At first, I hid in Syria, then I traveled to France.

How did you meet Agnieszka Holland?

MA: I was living in France, and I heard this project was in the works, went to the casting, and got the part. Acting had saved me from a complete breakdown in Syria, it gave me distance from the crisis I had lived amidst, and now through acting I was at least partially processing things. Every day when we finished shooting, we knew we'd be returning to a warm hotel, where a meal was waiting for us. We knew that after a few

hours work we would have a break to rest. I kept thinking about all those people who have no idea when they'll finally be somewhere safe again. Who don't know if they'll die the next minute, whether their children will die.

You're both actors, but you're also activists; you're engaged with what is happening in your country and in helping people like yourselves. Did acting in this film mean more than just any other job?

JA, MA: Absolutely.

JA: In one scene, when we were sitting in the military truck, I couldn't stop crying, I kept thinking about the fact that while we were shooting this scene, someone was experiencing it for real there on the border with Belarus. We were working under difficult conditions: it was rainy, it was cold, but still, we were taken care of. To imagine what the people on the border were feeling, how hard it must have been for them, was deeply painful.

MA: For me, the experience was truly extraordinary. It felt like a mixture of documentary and fiction. I met people on the set who had actually been at the border. Agnieszka had invited them, refugees who had succeeded in making it through and activists who had helped people survive. When I looked at them, it was hard to tell what was real and what was fiction.

That must have been quite remarkable for you, was it also difficult emotionally?

JA: Yes. But we didn't make this film as entertainment. Like Agnieszka said, we have a moral obligation to show how these people are suffering. As an actor, I feel obligated to tell that story as best I can. I think of the film *Hotel Rwanda* (Terry George, 2004), which showed me what had really happened there. These people did not choose this, they never wanted to be refugees. They were forced to leave their families. I was forced to do the same, to leave my family, my friends, my cats... I know exactly how they felt. Which is all the more reason for wanting to tell the story of their pain.

MA: For me, it is important that viewers pause and ask themselves what is going on at Europe's borders. The very process of questioning can lead to something bigger, and that is what I care about—motivating people to think, to reflect.

Agnieszka, quite a few important Polish films that deal with critical issues have met with hostility from people who never even saw them and never would, because they already knew what was in them and that it would be one sided. In this, you've done justice to all sides, with tact and compassion.

AH: It's hard for me to say whether that's true, but I've never felt it was my task as an artist to pass judgment on others, to be a judge or, God forbid, a prosecutor. I tell stories and I depict the various options and choices that different people face. What is most important to me is to represent community and the that we are all a part of it.

What community do you mean? The community of migrants?

AH: Mohamad mentioned Sławomir Mrożek's *Emigrants*, which was the first play I ever directed for the stage. It was a hugely important work for me as well, and later I too became an emigrant in Paris. I know that as a white artist I was still privileged though, I was still in Europe, and in a country that supported opposition movements. What awaits the masses of Syrians, Afghans, Yemenis, Somalis, and others who attempt to migrate to Europe today is something much worse. It is more similar to the situation of the Polish Jews interned in Zbąszyń, on the German-Polish border in 1938, when the Polish government was trying to illegally strip them of their citizenship. Or to the Ukrainian famine engineered by Russia in my film *Mr Jones*. A cinematic warning of what awaits Ukrainians today, and a harbinger of what totalitarianism is capable of.

You're trying to show people that the world isn't black and white, that there's more than two sides to the story.

AH: I think that rendering the world according to some binary concept is nothing more than dishonesty and can only end in crime. It may be that we have to hit rock bottom one more time, to live through something horrible again, to realize that, for humanity, there is no other way but that of solidarity, of sharing our experiences, and of respecting the right of other people to lead their lives in dignity.

How did you put your cast and crew together?

AH: I had a lot of help from Behi Djanati Atai, who plays the Afghan woman, Leila. While she is a professional actor, she also works as a casting director in France, and she's the one who found Mohamed Al Rashi and Jalal Altawil here, as well as Dalia, who plays Amina, the wife of Bashir in the film. We had been looking for actors all over Europe. It was important for us that the Arabic spoken by the refugee family in the film be consistent because Arabic is a diverse language with many dialects.

They were joined by a constellation of Polish actors, including Maja Ostaszewska, who plays the main activist character and has herself spent time at the border, delivering aid to the victims. Tomek Włosok, who plays the border guard is wildly talented. He appears on screen together with his wife, Malwina Buss. They're husband and wife in the film as well.

I had directorial support on the set from Kamila Tarabura and Kasia Warzecha, my Kasia Adamik, as well as from DP Tomek Naumiuk.

Mohamad, Jalal, Agnieszka, what do you think viewers will see on the screen?

MA: They'll see things that are hard to imagine. They'll see the forest not just as something beautiful, green, full of birds and other animals. They'll see all the horrors in it as well, and what a terrifying place it can be.

AH: Audiences will see a side of the world in which we live. Films are there for people to share in experiences and develop empathy for worlds unknown or scary to them. Films are there to defuse irrational fears and to nurture a certain kind of feeling, one that transcends individual experience.

JA: I'd like to add something about the refugees from Syria and from Ukraine. About the similarities between them. Putin has done in Ukraine what he did earlier in Aleppo, and my support is unwavering for the Ukrainians. Putin has destroyed both their country and mine and now is trying to terrorize the whole world. I do wonder though about the double standards. Ukrainian refugees are welcomed, others not so much. It seems to me that the only danger here is Putin, not these innocent people. The media and politicians portray refugees and immigrants as the bad guys, as thieves who have come to take away your country, your jobs, and your women. These people aren't interested in taking anything away from anyone.

Agnieszka, you're an idealist. Is your goal with this film is to remind people of their humanity?

AH: I have no illusions about my capacity as an individual to save the world, I'm really not an idealist. I agree with Marek Edelman when he said that that the potential for evil can awaken in any person at any moment, and that those who control that bear a great responsibility. Do I believe that I, alone or in cooperation with others who think like me, can change this? I don't think I can; however, I believe it is my obligation to try. Lately, I often find myself thinking of Wyspiański's words: "Wherever we can, we must take control, given that so many relinquish control over so much that happens". I don't know how to change the world, but I do know how to tell stories with the aid of film, so that's what I do.



DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Agnieszka Holland is a Polish film director and scriptwriter, born in Warsaw in 1948. After graduating from FAMU in Prague in 1971 she began her film career working as an assistant director of Krzysztof Zanussi and was mentored by Andrzej Wajda. Throughout her work life the filmmaker was nominated for the Academy Award 3 times - in 1985 for *ANGRY HARVEST*, in 1990 for *EUROPA EUROPA* and 2012 for *IN DARKNESS*. Holland's numerous features include *OLIVIER, OLIVIER* (1992), *THE SECRET GARDEN* (1993), *TOTAL ECLIPSE* (1995), *JULIE WALKING HOME* (2001), *SPOOR* (2017), *MR. JONES* (2019) and *CHARLATAN* (2020) among others. She also directed episodes of many notable TV series, including *TREME* and *HOUSE OF CARDS*.

JALAL ALTAWIL

Born in Maaloula (Syria), Jalal Altawil graduated from the Damascus Higher School of Theatre Arts in 2006. He began his career in Syria, performing in and directing 24 plays in parallel with his activity as a drama teacher. His roles in more than thirty TV series made him a household name in his native country. Following his participation in peaceful demonstrations in the Syrian revolution of 2011, he was arrested, tortured and imprisoned twice and was forced to leave Syria. Working in refugee camps around the Syrian border, he created the project *Butterfly Effect*, based on body expression workshops with Syrian children, in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Egypt, allowing them to express the traumas experienced during the war, in partnership with doctors and psychologists. Increasingly in danger due to his political commitment and his proximity to the Syrian territory, he accepted the asylum offered to him by France in 2015, becoming a refugee himself. After difficult beginnings, Jalal was cast in *Les optimistes*, directed by Ido Shaker and produced by Ariane Moushkiné's Théâtre du Soleil. He also appeared in *Tous des Oiseaux* by Wajdi Mouawad (2017), a play that toured internationally for five years. In 2018, he returned to TV in one of the main roles in the series *Eden*, produced by Arte and directed by Dominik Moll before turning to cinema, first with leads in short films such as *Je serai parmi les Amandiers* (Grand Prix at Cinemed, nominated for the Césars in 2021) or *Riad* (Clap d'Or, Sens, 2023), then in features including *Neighbours*, directed by Mano Khalil (Solothurn Prize, San Francisco Jury Prize) or *The Cairo Conspiracy*, by Tarik Saleh (Official Competition at the Cannes Film Festival 2022, Screenplay Prize).



MAJA OSTASZEWSKA

Theatre and film actress Maja Ostaszewska was born on September 3, 1972 in Kraków. In 1996 she graduated in acting from the Ludwik Solski State Drama School in Kraków. Her exceptional talent was noticed as early as her graduation performance of Krystian Lupa's staging of *Platonov* by Anton Chekhov.



She debuted on the big screen in Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* and earned national fame and awards at the Polish Film Festival in Gdańsk for her performances in Jan Hryniak's *Przystań*, Łukasz Barczyk's *Patrzę na Ciebie, Marysiu*, and Teresa Kotlarczyk's *Prymas. Trzy lata z tysiąca*. In 2001, Maja won the Polityka Passport Award in recognition of her outstanding film roles which show modern, sensitive and credible acting.

In recent years she has become more involved in comedies. She has appeared in Patryk Vega's blockbusters -*Pitbull. Nowe początki* and *Pitbull. Niebezpieczne kobiety*.

On the stage, her ongoing collaboration with Krzysztof Warlikowski began in 2005 with *Krum* by Hanoch Levin. Since 2008 she has been a member of the Nowy Teatr ensemble.

Maja is also widely known for her activism in the field of animal rights protection, receiving an award from the World Society for the Protection of Animals in 2002.

BEHI DJANATI ATAI

Franco-Iranian actress Behi Djanati Atai was born in Tehran. After completing a Master's degree in the sciences, she returned to her passion for cinema and the stage and has appeared in more than 25 films. For her extraordinary contribution to Culture, Behi has been recognized as a *Chévalier des Arts et Lettres* by the French Cultural Ministry.



Her film career started with Rolf de Heer's multi-award-winning *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories* (2001). Other notable appearances include *Altiplano* by Jessica Woodworth and Peter Brosens (Critics' Week Cannes, 2009); Arash T. Riahi's *For a Moment, Freedom* (shortlisted for the 2010 Academy Awards), Babak Anvari's BAFTA-winning and Oscar-shortlisted *Under the Shadow*; Eva Husson's *Girls of the Sun* (Official Competition, Cannes 2018). Her voice work includes Nora Twomey's multi-awarded and 2018 Oscar-nominated Best Animated Feature Film, *The Breadwinner*. She has also appeared in the Emmy-award-winning series *Tehran* directed by Daniel Syrkin.

She has graced the stage in over twenty theatrical productions in France and abroad. Beyond her acting career, Behi is the founder of the "La Lampe" theater company within the "Co'Art" artistic collective.

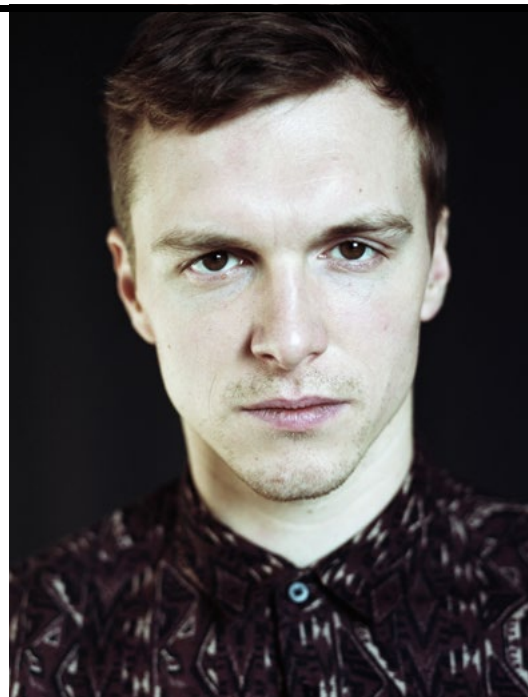
As an author and director, she has written and staged several plays, including *Hedâyat* (published by Filigranes) and *Women's Voices and Heritage*. Her most recent publication is a translation of Mohammad Bamm's poetry collection *You Can't Trust*.

Behi has just wrapped Léa-jade Horlier's *Roses of Kabul*, now in post-production. Her next movie will be Ayat Najafi's 1979.

TOMASZ WŁOSOK

Tomasz Włosok, born in Warsaw in 1990, is one of the most versatile and prolific Polish movie actors of the younger generation. He has appeared in more than 50 films to date.

Tomasz began his career with a role in Andrzej Wajda's last film *Afterimage* (2016). He is a winner of the award for Best Supporting Actor at the Polish Film Festival in Gdynia for his role as Walden in the film *How I Became a Gangster. A True Story* directed by Maciej Kawulski (2019). Besides garnering critical acclaim for Tomasz, the film also ranked first as Netflix's global non-English language film and second in the overall platform's rankings. His upcoming releases include the films "The King of Pushers" by Pat Hawle Kostrzyszyn and German director Julia von Heinz's first English-language feature "Iron Box".



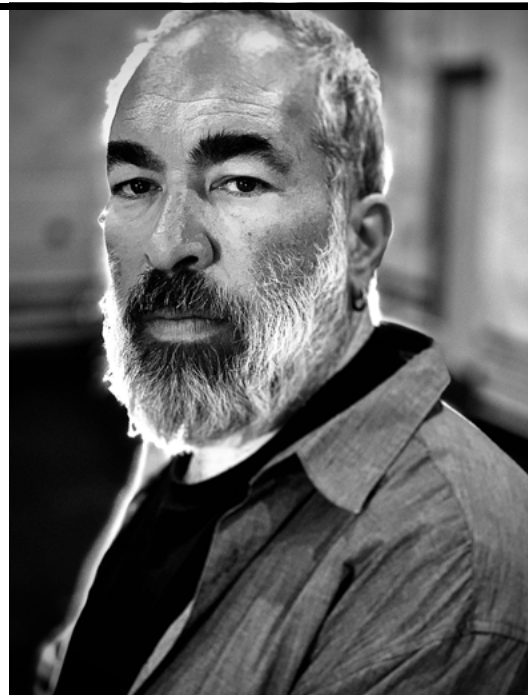
MOHAMAD **AL RASHI**

Actor, director and musician Mohamad Al Rashi was born in Syria on September 19, 1970. He graduated from the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts of Damascus in 1995. Since 2014, he has lived in Marseille, France.

His work in cinema includes "The Immigrants" by Soavoder Mrojek (2011) and "The 4th O'clock In Paradise Time" (2013, both directed by Mohamadabdoul Aziz. In 2018 he appeared in "Handarbeit-Cover up" by Marie-Amelie Steul. His most recent role was in "Les Indésirables" by Ladj Ly (2022). Mohamad is also a prolific television actor, appearing in about 20 TV movies and 50 TV series.

Mohamad still remains true to his first love of the stage as a founding member of the association "Damascus Theater Laboratory" where he is also part of the faculty. He began his professional life as an actor at the National Theater in Damascus and played in several shows by director Riad Ossmat such as "The Nights of Sha Hrayar" (1996), "The Journey of Narcissus" (1997) and "A Streetcar Named Desire" (1998). In 2000, he appears in "Gilgamesh" by Pascal Rambert as part of the Festival d'Avignon. Soavoder Mrojek's "The Immigrants" staged by Samer Omran (2008) opens in Damascus and goes on to Amman, Beirut, Cairo and Sharjah. 2010 sees Mohamad in "The novel of Baïbars" directed by Marcel Bozonnet in Paris and Marseille. With "While I was waiting for you" by Mohammad El Attar, staged by Omar Abussada. Mohamad tours the Avignon Festival, Brussels, Lausanne, Naples, Zurich, Paris and Geneva. "Your love is Fire" by Moudar Alhaje staged by Rafat Al Zakout tours in Germany and at the Edinburgh Festival.

As a musician, he joined the group Catherine Vincentin 2014. He also composes music for the theatre.



DALIA NAOUS

Dalia Naous is a Franco-Lebanese actress, dancer, and choreographer. She holds a diploma of Higher Studies in Theater from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Beirut (2004), and a master's degree in Choreographic Performance Art from Paris VIII (2006) in Paris.

She made her screen debut in short films in Lebanon and in *The little drop*, a Lebanese web series (2014-19). She starred in the French films *Exifiltés* by Emmanuel Hammon (2019), *The Divided* by Catherine Corsini (2021), *Green Border* by Agnieszka Holland (2023) and *Les barbares* (2023, currently in post-production) by Julie Delpy.

In parallel to her work as an actress and dancer, Dalia directed two dance projects. *Cairography* (2013), a video-dance inspired by her personal experience as a woman in the streets of Cairo, was presented in more than 70 festivals around the world. *Incise-out* (2023), was inspired by the testimonies of Egyptian women about their relationship to their bodies and their femininity.

Since 2021, she has been part of the Troupe de l'imaginaire of the National Theater in Paris for poetic, dance, and music consultations under the direction of Emmanuel Demarcy Motta. Dalia has also been selected as a laureate of the prestigious Villa Albertine residency program in 2024.





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