

---

Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2004-2019

---

2017

## 83 Orange Peels

Klara Hammoud  
*University of Central Florida*



Part of the [Film Production Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/etd>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Masters Thesis (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2004-2019 by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact [STARS@ucf.edu](mailto:STARS@ucf.edu).

---

### STARS Citation

Hammoud, Klara, "83 Orange Peels" (2017). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2004-2019*. 5390.  
<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/etd/5390>



83 ORANGE PEELS  
A MICRO-BUDGET EXPERIMENTAL DOCUMENTARY FEATURE

by

KLARA HAMMOUD  
BA. University of Damascus, 2009

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Entrepreneurial Digital Cinema  
in the School of Visual Arts and Design  
in the College of Arts and Humanities  
at the University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida

Spring Term  
2017

© 2017, Klara Hammoud

## **ABSTRACT**

83 ORANGE PEELS *is* a feature-length film written and directed by Klara Hammoud and produced by Biddayat as part of the requirements for earning a Master of Fine Arts in Entrepreneurial Digital Cinema from the University of Central Florida. The project aims to challenge existing conventions of the documentary filmmaking on multiple levels – aesthetic, narrative, and technical– while also examining growing importance of workflow throughout all aspects of production. These challenges were both facilitated and necessitated by the limited resources available to the production team and the academic context of the production. This thesis is a record of the film, from concept to completion and preparation for delivery to an audience.

*“Revolution makes me a filmmaker.”*

—Santiago Alvarez

*“Better to die fighting for freedom than be a prisoner all the days of your life.”*

— Bob Marley

*“What interests me in the cinema is abstraction.”*

— Orson Welles

No staging

No directing

No actors

But real characters in real life situations

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my committee members, those who believed in my project and my artistic choice in making this film. I sincerely thank every UCF faculty member, who helped and provided me with support to create this film. Furthermore, this work would be incomplete without the enormous efforts of my DP, sound designer, and musician, who put their hearts and souls into this project.

I dedicate this film to my friend, who died under torture for the sake of freedom...

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES .....	x
CHAPTER 1: EVIDENCE OF AESTHETIC LITERACY .....	1
Filmmaker’s Statement .....	1
Beginnings .....	2
Salah & Detention.....	3
Freedom of expression & Dictator-phobia.....	4
Safety Comes First.....	6
Appendix A: Photo Consent and Release Form By Salah Shaar .....	9
Appendix B: Photo Consent and Release Form By Amal Char .....	10
Appendix C: Written Consent Statement By Salah Shaar .....	11
Appendix: Verbal Consent Statement By Salah Shaar .....	12
My Revolution Against The Documentary Clichés .....	13
Aesthetic Literature Review .....	15
Screening List.....	30
References .....	31
Sketches.....	33
Camera Test.....	36
CHAPTER 2: EVIDENCE OF FINANCIAL LITERACY .....	38
Business Plan.....	38
Information and Risk Statement.....	39
Executive Summary .....	39



Product Description .....	39
Industry Overview .....	43
Market Analysis & Strategy .....	46
General Marketing Strategy .....	47
Public Events Representation .....	64
Financial Plan.....	64
Complete Budget .....	66
Poster Drafts.....	67
<b>CHAPTER 3 : EVIDENCE OF PRODUCTION LITERACY.....</b>	<b>70</b>
Production Literature Review.....	70
Revolution of The Image .....	71
Production .....	73
Workflow .....	76
Sound.....	87
Music.....	91
Subtitling .....	94
Screening List.....	107
References .....	108
Crew List.....	110
Equipment List.....	110
Location List.....	111
<b>CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>112</b>

Ethical Filming.....112

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Salah’s photographs of his tortured body.....	2
Figure 2: Salah before and after detention.....	4
Figure 3: Syrian caricaturist Ali Farzat.....	5
Figure 4:My voice and anonymous name.....	8
Figure 5: Salah’s verbal consent.....	12
Figure 6: 83 ORANGE PEELS’s structure.....	15
Figure 7: “I am a man who does not mater dancing nor acting” .....	28
Figure 8:The Joke / Sketch .....	33
Figure 9: The Joke / Still.....	34
Figure 10:Orange Peels Dance / Sketch.....	35
Figure 11:Orange Peels Dance / Still.....	35
Figure 12:Salah and I during our first test session.....	36
Figure 13:Still from The Soaking Dream .....	37
Figure 14:The poster that was attached to the menu.....	51
Figure 15:Facebook Activity_Personal 1.....	53
Figure 16:Facebook Activity_Perosnal 2.....	54
Figure 17:Facebook Activity_Political.....	55
Figure 18: Audience’s activity at the end of 2016.....	57
Figure 19:Audience’s activity for Mar 2017 .....	57
Figure 20:Survey Question_1 .....	60

Figure 21: Survey Question_2 .....	61
Figure 22: Survey Question_3 .....	62
Figure 23: Poster Draft_1.....	67
Figure 24:Poster Draft_2.....	68
Figure 25:Still from The Dinner Table scene .....	74
Figure 26:Still from The Mouse scene.....	80
Figure 27:Still from Orange Peels Dance scene .....	82
Figure 28:Still fromThe Balcony scene .....	83
Figure 29 Shapes juxtaposition creates visual vocabulary .....	84
Figure 30:Framing and Transition .....	85
Figure 31:The Mouse as a symbol .....	86
Figure 32 83 ORANGE PEELS Music Theme.....	92
Figure 33 BBC Subtitle Guidelines .....	97
Figure 34:Subtitle Positioning_1 .....	99
Figure 35:Subtitle Positioning_2 .....	100
Figure 36:Subtitling the song lyrics_1 .....	103
Figure 37:Subtitling the song lyrics_2.....	103
Figure 38:Subtitling Numbers.....	105

## CHAPTER 1: EVIDENCE OF AESTHETIC LITERACY

### Filmmaker's Statement

When it comes to torture and detention stories, filmmakers force us to confront pain and brutal reality by including brutal and graphic content. By using the shock effect on the audience, some filmmakers believe that audience would be more affected, engaged, and aware. However, stories about torture and detention could be achieved through the utilization of the cinematic form to engage the audience with this intolerable human rights violation. Nowadays, we are surrounded by brutal visuals in newspapers, TV news, and social media posts. From my research and experience in the making of this film, I realized that audience cannot be made aware of any crime against humanity through unbearable content, on the contrary, they would use the schemata for turning away when it is too unpleasant (Deleuze). Even though most of the Syrian filmmakers who make films about Syria and the terror, employ graphic images in order to increase the shock effect, and raise the awareness of the audience.

With my experimental documentary film 83 ORANGE PEELS, I turn film into an open stage for theatrical and poetical performance, in which the historical world of a political detainee is unfolded lyrically. I risk my personal safety and conventional cinematic form to insert my suppressed voice (literally and metaphorically), and create a documentary with lyricism and authenticity that could not be accomplished through more traditional aesthetic approaches.

## *Beginnings*

In 2015 a friend of mine told me about a Syrian refugee and previous detainee, who is now living in the USA and is a proud hookah café owner. This individual is looking for a filmmaker to document his story in a film. I decided to go to his hookah café and meet with him. With a cup of Syrian black tea flavored with strong cardamom, a big smile and a load of confidence, he welcomed me in his café. He rushed to a little drawer in the back of his café, and brought me a bunch of photos. “Yes, they tortured me...”, said Salah. “This is my foot... look, this is my back... and this is my wife, she did not recognize me! Do you know why they did this to me? Because I shouted for freedom!”.

Salah was telling me his story, while showing me the photos over and over. His storytelling and his body language captivated me. I said, " Salah, would you like to tell your story?"



Figure 1: Salah's photographs of his tortured body

## *Salah & Detention*

In 2011, when the peaceful revolution erupted in Syria, Salah did not realize that chanting for freedom was a sin, for which he would end up in the darkness of Syrian prisons. Salah Shaar, now 64 years old, was arrested for 83 days in a 3 by 4 feet room, with 45 other men. He experienced physical and psychological torture. Participation in the peaceful protests and providing the demonstrators with loudspeakers for their angry chants, was enough of an accusation to arrest Salah in 2013. He witnessed people die under torture. A general amnesty was the reason for his release. After his release, Salah escaped with his family to the US to start a new life. Salah realized that the revolution, the desired freedom, the hearty chants, are gone with the wind. The past, the present, and the future are chasing him as everything was stolen by foreign agendas and the extremist groups. This left a deep scar in his mind, and he wants to tell people about it all in 83 ORANGE PEELS



Figure 2: Salah before and after detention

### *Freedom of expression & Dictator-phobia*

Story one: A Syrian caricaturist Ali Farzat drew a sketch criticizing the Syrian regime for their brutal reaction against the peaceful protestors. In the first hour nothing happened, another hour went by and still nothing, by the third hour, his fingers were broken when he left his house. He was beaten by a disguised group, they broke his fingers and asked him how he dares mocking the regime?

Story Two: A Syrian citizen, wrote nothing, painted nothing, and filmed nothing against the regime. In the first day nothing happened to him. In the second day nothing happened to him either. But on the third day he was arrested and the accusation for arrest was his brother who lives in the refuge wrote an article against the regime.

Story Three: A Syrian animator Muthanna Humzawi participated in a short sarcastic cartoon criticizing the regime's symbols. In the first week nothing happened to him. In the



second week nothing transpired either. However, in the third week he called me expressing his fear of being arrested after having received threatening phone calls and messages. On new year's eve, he was arrested without informing his family. After months of torture, his dead body was shoved in the restroom for eight months. After a year I dedicated 83 ORANGE PEELS to him.

This is how risky freedom of expression is in Syria. If you decide to practice it, you do not only risk your life, but the life of your family and those whom you love. This is why using a pseudonym for my thesis document and my film is not a choice, but an obligation. Using a different name, or a pseudonym is a shield I must use to hide my identity and protect my family who are still living in Syria.



Figure 3: Syrian caricaturist Ali Farzat

## *Safety Comes First*

From my very first meeting with Salah, I only imposed one rule on myself: to know Salah as much as possible, and to give him the space and freedom to be himself, and insure his safety, as well as mine. 83 ORANGE PEELS is a very personal project for me and by making this film, in some way or another, I live the freedom of expression. However, when you live under a dictatorship, like I did, you feel that you cannot easily get rid of your fears. You suffer from dictator-phobia. This phobia accompanies you wherever you go, even if and when you leave your country. By making this film I am giving myself the opportunity to practice the freedom of expression for the first time. At the same time, I am ensuring that making this film will not put the safety of my film's character or mine under any jeopardy.

In 2013, Salah escaped to the US with his family that consists of his wife and daughter, his eldest sons were already here studying medicine in Boston. Salah feels safe, he shares his political opinions and practices freedom of expression to the fullest. He uses his real name on social media without any fear of being targeted by the regime. When I ask him about how comfortable he is with appearing in this film without any filters, he always says:

*“The revolution helped me to overcome my fear. I am not afraid anymore. I participated in the peaceful protests and asked for Assad's downfall. I think I did worse things than being filmed. My family is here, and nobody can reach us or cause us harm. I am the film and I want people to know what happened to me and I want the whole world to witness the story of the Syrian people”*

—Salah

My own situation is completely different from Salah's. His family is here, he does not fear any harm. My family is still in Syria, therefore I do not have the freedom to express and

share any of my political stands, or reveal my real name directly. However, the Syrian revolution made me a filmmaker, and challenged me to create my own artistic methodology to practice the freedom of expression. Making this film and adopting a specific aesthetic choice helped me insert my suppressed voice literally and metaphorically.

Although I enjoy the safety of being a refugee in the USA, I decided to keep my name anonymous, hide my face, and identity, in order to ensure the safety of my family in Syria. However, my filmic decisions and my presence are presented in the film by foregrounding the film machinery and using theatrical and poetical qualities, which helped me bring my presence to this film. It is true that I am going to use my real voice to record some of the poems, but I believe that a voice does not behold the identity like the explicit name, or the face.

The name: Klara Hammoud, is an anonymous name that I used during working as a radio broadcaster for one of the anti-regime radios in Turkey back in 2013. I used to read the Press Tour with sarcastic narration and tone. This experience gave me the confidence to use my real voice for 83 ORANGE PEELS without any filtering or distortion. I am not alone indeed. Many Syrians who worked in media and art fields and still have family back in Syria, created a Syrian pseudonym for the safety of their families.

Below is a record of my narration for the Press Tour in 2013. You can hear my pseudonym at 6:36 min.



Figure 4:My voice and anonymous name

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5IsUdXC6j2Y>

In addition to that, I tackled, in the business plan section, my strategy for public representation.

Appendix A: Photo Consent and Release Form By Salah Shaar



**Photo Consent and Release Form**

Without expectation of compensation or other remuneration, now or in the future, I hereby give my consent to [83 ORANGE PEELS], its affiliates and agents, to use my image and likeness and/or any interview statements from me in its publications, advertising or other media activities (including the Internet). This consent includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) Permission to interview, film, photograph, tape, or otherwise make a video reproduction of me and/or record my voice;
- (b) Permission to use my name; and
- (c) Permission to use quotes from the interview(s) (or excerpts of such quotes), the film, photograph(s), tape(s) or reproduction(s) of me, and/or recording of my voice, in part or in whole, in its publications, in newspapers, magazines and other print media, on television, radio and electronic media (including the Internet), in theatrical media and/or in mailings for educational and awareness.

This consent is given in perpetuity, and does not require prior approval by me.

Name: Salah Shaar

Signature: [Handwritten Signature]

Address: 8512 Lake Vista Ct Apt 8304

Orlando FL 32821

Date: 4-8-17



### Photo Consent and Release Form

Without expectation of compensation or other remuneration, now or in the future, I hereby give my consent to [83 ORANGE PEELS], its affiliates and agents, to use my image and likeness and/or any interview statements from me in its publications, advertising or other media activities (including the Internet). This consent includes, but is not limited to:

(a) Permission to interview, film, photograph, tape, or otherwise make a video reproduction of me and/or record my voice;

(b) Permission to use my name; and

(c) Permission to use quotes from the interview(s) (or excerpts of such quotes), the film, photograph(s), tape(s) or reproduction(s) of me, and/or recording of my voice, in part or in whole, in its publications, in newspapers, magazines and other print media, on television, radio and electronic media (including the Internet), in theatrical media and/or in mailings for educational and awareness.

This consent is given in perpetuity, and does not require prior approval by me.

Name: AMAL CHAAR

Signature: Amal 32821

Address: 2512 Lake Vista Spt 8304 - Orlando FL 32821


Date: 4-8-17

Appendix C: Written Consent Statement By Salah Shaar

 83 ORANGE PEELS

I, Salah Shaar, am writing this letter to confirm that my family and I live in the USA, and feel no safety risk of any nature, as a result of participating / appearing in the documentary film 83 Orange Peels. I have since the initial phase of making the film, expressed to Ms. Klara Hammoud, the director of 83 ORANGE PEELS, that I feel safe participating in this film, and do not have any concerns whatsoever using my real name, real face, or real voice. My family is safe with me here in the USA and share, with me, the safety of our blessed homes here.

Participating in this film gives me the space and time to document my story, and express my political opinions without fearing persecution, or feeling that I am under any form of censorship. Therefore, I hereby give Ms. Klara Hammoud the explicit and exclusive permission to film, edit, and distribute my story in this film.

Name: Salah Shaar  
Signature:   
Address: 8512-Lake Vista Ct Apt. 8304, Orlando FL 32821  
Date: 4-8-2017



Appendix: Verbal Consent Statement By Salah Shaar

I also secured a video recorded release from Salah, where he grants me the right to make and publish a film about him, and his story. (Click on the link below)



Figure 5: Salah's verbal consent

<https://vimeo.com/210614755?activityReferer=1>

PW: SalahRelease



## *My Revolution Against The Documentary Clichés*

We live in a world of clichés, where we are trained to absorb the intolerable scenes. Those intolerable scenes become tolerable (Dumit). The scenes of terrorist attacks around the world, the plane hijacking, the beheading of ISIS's victims, the torture in detentions, the violence, all are presented to us on TV screens and social media mediums, they shock us, then they become a tolerable ritual visual experience.

Most of the documentary films' content and style, especially in my country Syria, are subject to the prophecy and clichés. The experience of documentary film watching is a predictable experience. The viewer can tell how things are going to be presented on the screen, especially when it comes to political issues, and more specifically torture and detention. Documentary filmmakers present a cluster of footage, head to the camera interviews, narration, reenactments scenes of the historical world of torture experience, a handful of graphic brutal footage, and a predictable storytelling structure. The aforementioned makes watching a documentary film a ritual and monotone practice, which in turn leads to making a story about human rights violations a cliché, and a tolerable issue that can be delivered with passiveness and submissiveness.

To make a documentary film about the historical world of a detainee through the usage of classical cinematic form, expository modality, accompanied with a didactic journalistic information means that the film itself is going to vanish as soon as the viewer turns off his / her TV, laptop, or leaves their seat at the movie theater, because classicalism kills the eagerness and gives no consciousness, especially in modernity as we live in a world where visual content

matters. A classical documentary film brings us back to the experience of watching TV news, where the audience will remember nothing from a news, a week after they watched it.

Even in a documentary film, I think that the audience should be aware of the filmmaking process, and as much as feasible, lose themselves in the experience. In most of the documentary films, the audience is fed with straight forward information. In making *83 ORANGE PEELS*, I imposed two of Michael Moore's 13 rules for making documentary films (Moore): I am not making a documentary, but I am making a movie, I am not giving the audience a lecture and a same old story, but I am exploring the film as a medium, the film itself, and its power to raise questions.

*83 ORANGE PEELS* is a poem, an open stage for theatrical and poetical performance in which the historical world of a political detainee is unfolded lyrically. It is a visual and literal poem "literally and metaphorically" about a Syrian revolutionists, and a previous detainee: Salah Shaar, 64 years old, was arrested in a 3 by 4 feet room, with 45 other men, he experienced physical and psychological torture. 83 Days, with torture, mange, lice, and dead deformed bodies. The one thing he was waiting impatiently for during his detention, was the orange peel. Through the window bars, his guard used to peak through, open his mouth, and spit out the peels of the orange on the detainees. This "humiliation" was a gift for Salah, it killed his thirst, and it eased his pain. It was a connection to the life outside the insanity of the detention.

*"I waited for it, like a lover waits for his mistress." — Salah.*

### Aesthetic Literature Review

Have you ever seen a film about the experience of torture and detention, where the stories were told through dancing, poem readings, singing, and a theatrical monologue? This is what 83 ORANGE PEELS brings to the viewer, a theatrical and poetical experience. How do I bring Salah's inner side to a feature film? 83 ORANGE PEELS reveals two different sides of Salah:

- Salah's daily life: Delivered through the realistic scenes
- Salah's inner life: Delivered through poetic scenes

The two worlds are intermingled, and blurred so that the audience gets to know Salah and his story very well throughout the whole film.



Figure 6: 83 ORANGE PEELS's structure

This film is about a Syrian revolutionist dreams of the desired freedom, the “desired orange”. The dreams of Salah are introduced spontaneously. In most of the scenes, Salah was undirected. He was only introduced to ideas and premises, but he lived the moment, started the

scenes, ended the scenes, and expressed his feelings at his own pace, and as he saw fit. This methodology will make the viewers engaged, and wonder whether Salah is a real character ‘social actor’ or a professional actor, whether he is directed or directing, and whether his story is fiction or non-fiction.

Unlike a found footage film, where the viewer is asked to look at events that have already happened, 83 ORANGE PEELS is creating a theatrical, poetical, and a real life stage that is unfolding in front of the viewer. On this stage, Salah lived the memories, he danced, he sang, he screamed, he cried, he laughed hysterically, and he celebrated each moment. This is not a classical found footage film, but a classic and a stereotypical story about torture and detention that was presented in a revolutionary style, which in itself resembles the meaning of the Syrian revolution. Revolution against restrictions, censorship, and for the freedom of expression and speech.

83 ORANGE PEELS is a project inspired by the pain, hope, determination, and revolution of the Syrian people. Typically, when it comes to documentary films, the viewers always bring preexisting knowledge of genre conventions, familiar signs and symbols, in order to interpret the meaning of the documentary film. 83 ORANGE PEELS challenges the preexisting knowledge, and conventional construction of a documentary film by breaking the rules of the classical documentary filmmaking, such as, conventional interviews (face to camera), classical way of footage utilization, and conventional narration. This may fill, by the end of the film, as didactic purpose. One of my main goals is to give the viewer a chance to be a co-creator of the film meaning. This project will show evidence of aesthetic literacy in the construction, the visual design, and the editing, all of which have a direct relationship to the film’s content.

According to Bakhtin's dialogic theory, meanings are not fixed but open, and there is a perpetual generation of meanings (Oropeza). The construction of 83 ORANGE PEELS is inspired by Bakhtin's dialogical theory, in another words, by applying his linguistic theory to the filmic language, I can create a structure of a documentary film that is not fixed, but flexible and open to different meanings. This was my intention throughout the film creation. Creating a documentary film that is not a cluster of interviews and footage arranged conventionally to educate and raise audience attention.

History shows that wars and revolutions have pushed filmmakers to revolt against the classical image formula, and find innovative ways to present their thoughts and perspective. In the Arab world, documentary filmmaking, especially around the 80s and 90s, were struggling to step outside the state dominance (Zeevalkink). In Syria, documentary filmmaking was and still state funded, this means that documentary filmmakers are expected to hail the great achievements of the state (Salti). Consequently, documentary film becomes a bag that is rehashed, over and over again, with the same prophesied images, where filmmakers glut their audience with clichés without giving them a chance to think or interact with what they see. It is a preachment session where everything is predicted. When the Arab Spring erupted in the Arab World, documentary filmmakers and ordinary people, who have no experience with filmmaking, started reflecting what is happening on their political ground, then creating a film experience, a documentary film, and history itself. All this happened congenitally as a revolution against the cliché and the long decades of oppression. Independent production film organizations emerged to support this new wave of cinema. This brings us to the concept of camera-stylo which is a necessity for the aesthetic choices that were adopted in the making of 83 ORANGE PEELS.

The French film critic and film director, Alexandre Astruc has depicted how everyday films show their tired and conventional faces to the world, and how cinema has been nothing more than a show (Astruc). In 83 ORANGE PEELS, I challenge the conventional and predictable face of documentary films. I started by freeing my thoughts and imagination, and thinking of a new way of expression. When I started telling people that I am working on my documentary film, their definition of documentary film appeared as, “Well, so it is a collection of interviews, a cluster of footage, and voiceover?” When I added that the film is about a previous Syrian detainee who experienced torture in detention, they added, “So, we are expecting reenactment of the torture procedure, right?”.

Cinema is incapable of rendering every psychological or metaphorical overtone (Astruc). I believe that my imagination is my “colors”, and my camera and voice are my “brush” with which I painted my impressionist film as a poem and a theater. Since predicting is a killer to any film, the images are free from being a slave to the rules and prophecy. The image renders the psychological torture, the memories, the anger, the sadness, the dreams, and the happiness. All of the aforementioned happened by breaking the visual rules and the visual tyranny.

The film is a stage for Salah, that is free from rules and directing restrictions. He danced, sang, cursed, revealed his political and religious opinions, and had an open monologue with no script and no directing. Also, I wanted Salah to be physically free. We see Salah’s bare body, wearing nothing but his underwear. It is a revolt against the cultural and traditional codes. He stood facing the camera with everything he had. It is a revolution against the rules, traditions,

and censorship, which is inspired by his character and the need for change in the conventional documentary film.

Calling this film an experimental film gives the film a new vision. In other words, the tools of experimental film helped me deliver the memories of Salah, and create the aesthetic look of 83 ORANGE PEELS. It helped with creating a world for Salah to live his dreams and memories, and bring my presence to the film. This would make 83 ORANGE PEELS a stage for theatrical and real life performances. We see Salah in this theatrical and real life stage living his dreams, singing, dancing, crying, reading poems, laughing loudly, arguing with his wife, arguing with his friends, and living spontaneous and undirected moments. The film shows what Salah sees, hears, and feels. He lives his dreams and feels the bitter sweet aches of his past and the present memories about the desired freedom.

83 ORANGE PEELS is not a found footage film, docudrama, or journalistic film like *Taxi to the Dark Side*, *Standard Operating Procedure*, and *Syria's Torture Machine*. Found footage and docudrama interfere in the audiences' feelings and force them to sympathize with the story's characters. This is not the purpose of this film (Millard). In order to influence people's perspectives and motivate them to take action or to change their position, the distance between the audience and the truth should be shortened, and this would happen through opening the space for Salah to direct the scenes that were created during our regular meetings.

Bill Nichols states that documentary film does not only activate our aesthetic awareness, it also activates our social consciousness (Faulcon). I wanted to tweak Nichols's equation and say that the aesthetic awareness activates our social consciousness, and this is my main reason behind the emphasis on this aesthetic choice. The style would invite discussions, questions, and

arguments. Because film is a “reproduction of consciousness”, which functions “through a texture of seeing, hearing, and moving” (Rabiger), the style would bring together all of the previously mentioned in one place, and invite the viewer to become a co-creator of the film and its meaning. In order to engage the audience, I provided them with mental, emotional, and imaginative work to do, and invited them to co-create the film and its meanings (Rabiger).

The experimental and documentary elements were used to create a world a stage for the tangible and the intangible. Voiceover would carry the poetic and prosaic quality of the words “the poems” that were written by me and inspired by Salah’s stories. However, the strategies of filming and editing were open to chances and spontaneity of the moment, without a predetermined order (Simmons). The memories and dreams are thematic, they created the motion in the film through the color “orange”, the sound “airplane sound”, the movement “Salah’s dancing”, and the mundane “argument with his wife about smoking cigarettes”. All these, would turn the smallest detail into a theatrical stage, and a real life stage that is full of freedom.

The shooting style consists of two qualities: cinematic and personal. My definition for both qualities is:

- Cinematic: is filmed by our camera operator. It has powerful color grading and high resolution.
- Personal: is filmed by me. It is opposite to the cinematic, where quality is lower, as it resembles my phobia and hesitation of revealing my identity.

I adopted this style to emphasize my active presence as a filmmaker. The images have a different layer of abstraction and reality, but they were blurred and intermingled when they were



put together during editing. I made this aesthetic choice as I wanted to direct the audience to the medium, which includes the production process and myself as a filmmaker. I want to remind the audience that even though Salah is comfortable in front of the camera (as he dances, reads poems, argues with his wife, laughs, and cries), he is a real character with a real story, not a cinematic, or professional actor. As I am not going to reveal my name and identity as a filmmaker, for the safety of my family in Syria, I want the audience to feel my presences and hear my voice “metaphorically and literally”. By adopting this strategy, the film becomes a real life art, as Salah breaks the classical rules of documentary filmmaking, and shows his interaction with the crew and myself as an experimental expression (Simmons).

Because of the sensitivity of the film’s subject, there was only one crew member “camera operator” and one eye “one camera”. The camera operator shadowed Salah and his wife. The camera followed and moved with them to enable us observing Salah for a long duration and create the sensation of time, space, and Salah as a character (Scovell). The film *News From Home* is shot in a similar way, with long duration shots. Even though in the beginning of the film production I was thinking about using surveillance cameras, I refrained from using them because I realized that Salah had a bad memory with surveillance camera in the detention room, so I did not want to impose or take any disturbing choices for the aesthetic sake. Salah’s comfort and freedom were my priority and moral responsibility.

In 83 ORANGE PEELS, abstraction and absurdism were depicted in many places. Things were used for something, but meant something else. In *Roswell*, the filmmaker captures abstract concepts by using absurd methods. Things are not absolute, they do not have a fixed meaning, and if they have a meaning they are used to signify something else. For instance, in one of the scenes, we see Salah sitting on a toilet and watching TV news cut. The absolute meaning of the

toilet in reality is an absurd in the film. The toilet seat is an irony, it is meant to deliver two meanings:

- Direct meaning: Salah is doing “his business in the restroom” like in real life.
- Indirect meaning: Watching news and interviews with the president, or even thinking about any revolutionary ideas while in the restroom is taboo. In the *Joke Scene*, Salah is watching news cut of Assad’s interviews on international TV stations. Assad and his political and media adviser Shabaan are stating that they never tortured detainees and that all torture is done by the terrorists. By sitting on a toilet seat, Salah is mocking the nonsense lies and the propaganda that people in Syria are forced, and got used to listen to and believe.

The overpowered human being is not able to confront. He does not have the interruptive feature of behavior. At once, he abandons the confrontation distractedly and submissively, seeking peace or afraid of the consequences which means being arrested, tortured, and killed (Hijazi). Therefore, this aesthetic choice was adopted as a literal interpretation of the above mentioned, and to give Salah the space to live the desired confrontation moment, which all Syrians and people who live under dictatorship dreamed of.

The concept of confrontation is repeated many times throughout the film. In several occasions, we see Salah’s photographs of the torture marks on his body, and the photo of him and his wife taken right after his release, displayed on a wall in a small brick room. These photographs are of that past, the moment that has passed, but the film and the moment of filming is in the present tense (Simmons). The photographs and Salah are the subject here, even though the moment in the photograph is frozen, the usage of those photographs awakes the memories and the painful moments. Salah, at the moment of posting those photographs, is in confrontation

with his past, but he seizes the moment and reacts to the 100 copies of the photographs by articulating out loud how he feels in the moment and that moment from the past. In his book, “*The Psychology of the Overpowered Human Being*”, Mustafa Hijazi discussed how failing to achieve the self-value could trigger a severe aggressiveness that needs to be fulfilled in a way that would not harm and destroy the self or the others. 83 ORANGE PEELS is literary that stage that allowed Salah to confront his past and articulate out loud how he feels without any restrictions.

In addition to that, I wanted Salah to reveal his feelings and pass over painful memory by mocking the time. In *Roswell*, time was presented as the force that manipulates us. In many shots, a fish eye lens was used in order to change this equation and control the sky, the space, and the horizon, and make them seizable and containable. However, in my film, I did the opposite of this strategy. I wanted time and space to be open with no limits, no restrictions, or control. For example, in the *Joke Scene*, I wanted the viewer to live and feel the actual time “theatrical time” and not a sense of time “cinematic time” that could be achieved through editing. In the *Orange Peels Dance* scene, we see an open space with no restrictions, where Salah is dancing freely. The choice of the lens and the lighting made the space open. Salah is dancing freely and he is a part of space and time. Unlike the cinematic rules where time and space control the characters, in 83 ORANGE PEELS time and space are not controlling Salah. Salah, the space, and the time all are blended together. This helped me portrait Salah as a free person. The way I designed the set helped him escape from reality and elevate above the tragedy carried by time, into a space that has no limits and no rules. Long pauses is another strategy that would help

me to engage the viewers, make them closer to the personal aura of Salah, and make Salah a real and ordinary character, not a dramatic or professional one.

83 ORANGE PEELS is about themes and metaphors, the repetition of metaphors is also a strategy that I adopted. In his film *Roswell*, Brown repeated the frisbee's appearance many times and frisbee is his theme. In the case of Salah, he has an emotional and tragic memory with orange peels as his prison guard used to peak his head through the window bars, open his mouth, and spit out the peels of the orange on the detainees. Therefore, oranges, orange peels, orange juice, and orange color are repeated in many occasions to emphasize the symbolic meaning behind them.

Initially the orange theme was inspired by Salah's memories about detention and during detention. Therefore, orange has the following metaphors in the film:

- It is the whole orange that Salah was deprived from having during detention. He only had the guard's orange peels.
- The strong desire and craving for freedom. The desire to stay alive, to have the freedom of speech, and to be treated as a human.
- It is tomorrow's sunshine, happiness, the determination, and the strong believe that the revolution will succeed sooner or later.
- Salah had dreams about oranges while in detention. Seeing an orange in a dream signifies healing from pain, improvement in health, and prosperity. Eating an orange in a dream, signifies a wish fulfillment and an ideal place in life.

83 ORANGE PEELS is the world of Salah that he refuges to. With the opened scenes that

have no restrictions, no direction, and no time limits, Salah had the escape and refuge. Salah lived moments unlike his real life, he lived the position of being the director of his fate, he started the scene when he felt like it, and ended it the same way. For instance, in *The Mouse* scene, Salah had the space to have an open theatrical monologue with no time limit or direction, this scene was his space to say whatever he wants and feels, and he stopped when he wanted. Unlike real life, there was no time limitation, and camera was rolling and recording as much as the monologue would require.

As I met with Salah and his wife regularly, I was able to build a trust bond that enabled me to know their attitudes and daily routine, their daily conversations, and the rhythm of their day. This enabled me to film Salah's daily life, while he is in bed, cooking, making coffee, or arguing with his wife without giving any importance to the presence of the camera or mine. I know how Salah acts, talks, and moves, and I know his body language. The aforesaid helped me directing the camera distance from him.

Along with the visual aspects of the film, sound is important as well. Sound was employed in some scenes to invite the audience to synthesize the sound with the image and to connect the disconnected. In another words, the film sound and images are sometimes desynchronized. For instance, in a "poetic scene" we see Salah posting his photographs on the wall, but in the background we hear three different sound tracks. We hear his voice (diegetic sound) while he is on set, we hear (non-diegetic sound) him reading a poem, and we hear his voice from a "realistic scene" talking on the phone with his employee. This method is adopted to engage the audience and make watching the film an interactive experience. The viewer will make the connection between three components: the sound, the image, and the illustration of the

inner world of Salah. Sound and image are not anticipated by the next, although the next does not always arrive immediately, but sound and image will remind the viewer of the last or something that they will see after or they saw before (Simmons).

For instance, the viewer will hear my voice saying “Coma! Coma!” the image has no connection with the voiceover, later on in the film Salah explains the meaning of “coma” through telling his wife the coma story. This is when, the audience will make the connection between what they heard earlier, and what they hear now.

The historian Hayden White suggests that one of the key issues in the representation of a great pain, that have affected the memory of the past, lies in the possibility of searching for a language anchored in modernity (Moses). In the case of Salah, I found that it is very important to find a medium in which Salah can articulate his past. I found that writing poems and letting him read and record those poems (that reflect his anger about the past), is the language and the key to illustrate his pure inner world. During the production of this film, I discovered it’s power of articulation of the past. It is a method that helped Salah to confront his past and talk about everything freely. It also helped me to find a medium to affirm my presence and identity in this film and overcome my own fears. Recording our voiceover (Salah’s and mine) took the film to a new direction. The metaphorical sound for this film was created during the sound recording at the sound studio. I was able to witness how our voiceover created a conversation that reflected the Syrian situation, where people are divided into two groups, fearful and fearless. While recording, the conversation between Salah and myself became more poetic, and our voiceover portray a fusion of feelings. My fear and his boldness, my uncertainty and his certainty, and my anxiety and his bravery. Both voices united at the end with the sound of our laughter. For example, in one of the scenes Salah says: “The orange shall live, the dictator shall fall.” I overlap

him by saying: “The dictator is following me!”

Some scenes illustrate Salah’s memories and pain. In those scenes, we hear Salah reading poems and articulating the happiness, the sadness, and the anger. In the following poem he articulates his happiness and bitterness when the prison guard threw the orange peels. For Salah, the orange peel was his mistress that refreshed him and gave him hope:

*Come and feed my soul...*

*Eat my stench...*

*Sweeten my saliva...*

*You smell like freedom...*

*You taste like tomorrow...*

*Heal me heal... Sweet orange peel...*

The usage of poetic and prosaic words, helped to liberate Salah, and myself from the tyranny of a plot (Simmons). The poems were written by me and derived from Salah’s story, their importance comes from the importance of the verbal articulation of the invisible memory. While Salah reads pomes that are in colloquial Arabic “slang”, my poems are in standard Arabic “formal Arabic”. I took this aesthetic choice as I wanted to portray the fear of the Syrian people of expressing their political opinions regarding the revolution. Here, the standard language, the grammar, and the rules resemble a shield that protects my voice from being identified, and my inability to liberate myself from the concept that a secret service is watching and following me.

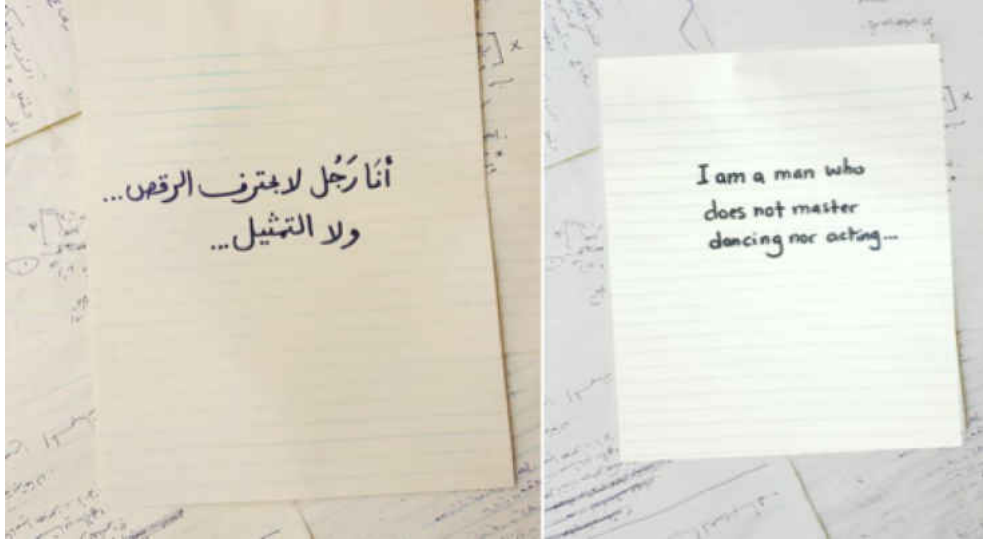


Figure 7: “I am a man who does not mater dancing nor acting”

The aesthetic choices that were adopted in this film helped to portray Salah’s memories. They were depicted visually, verbally, and physically. By performing and verbalizing, the memories attempt to exhume what was buried inside him. Even though Salah insisted on using reenactment methodology and he wanted to recreate the past, I refrained from this methodology because ethically and morally I did not want to put him under any pressure, and I did not want him to live the past. I believe that the methodology that was adopted in this film is utterly ethical.

In 83 ORANGE PEELS, I am not aiming to make a political, educational, or moral point. Instead I am giving my audience an emotional experience and open a discussion. In the end, as André Bazin explains, every film is a social documentary, and I believe that every social documentary is a cinematic film (Totaro). Through the aesthetic choice, I was able to experience my artistic perspective, “there is no reason why documentaries cannot be as personal as fiction filmmaking and bear the imprint of those who made them” (Morris).

I wanted the aesthetic choice and my film’s look to reflect the way I feel and think



(Sarris). Several experiments with the film as a medium, enabled me to find my way to express my personality, my vision, and my identity in the film. In the end, the director is the author of the film and he / she must show his / her personality as his / her signature. I am not saying that the content is not important, but I think in my case, the visual personality is very important and it helped me bring my temperature “my soul” and this is what I believe would make 83 ORANGE PEELS different from other documentary films (Sarris).

## Screening List

News From Home. Chantal Akerman.1977.

Roswell. Dir. Bill Brown, 1994.

Syria's Torture Machine. Dir. Jonathan Miller. A Film by Channel 4, 2012.

Standard Operating Procedure. Dir. Errol Morris. Participant Media, 2008.

Taxi to the Dark Side. Dir. Alex Gibney. Think Film, 2008.

## References

Astruc, Alexandre. "The Birth of A New Avant Garde: La Camera –Stylo”.

New Wave Film.com | French New Wave / Nouvelle Vague and International Cinema of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. L'Écran Française, 30 Mar. 1948.

D'Argenio, Maria Chiara. “A Poetic Cine Urgente: Experimentalism and Revolution in Santiago Álvarez’s Documentary Films.” Source: Studies in Spanish & Latin American Cinemas. Intellect, 01 July 2014. Web.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Vol. 30. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 1986. Print.

Dumit, Joseph. "Writing the Implosion: Teaching the World One Thing at A Time Cultural Anthropology." Culanth.org. American Anthropological Association 2014. Web.

Faulcon, Elizabeth C. “Creating Change Through Documentary Film: An Examination of Select Films.” Thesis. Rollins College, 2012. Web.

Grant, Barry Keith, and Jeannette Sloniowski. “Documenting the Documentary: Close Readings of Documentary Film and Video.” Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1998. Print.

Kim, Nelson. "Charles Burnett." Senses of Cinema. N.p., 08 Oct. 2016. Web.

Millard, Rosie. "Can a New Docudrama Teach Us to Empathies with the Feelings Of the 9/11 Attackers?" Newstatesman. 2004. Web.

Moore, Michael. "Michael Moore’s 13 Rules for Making Documentary Films." IndieWire. N.p., 10 Sept. 2014. Web.

Moses, A. Dirk y Hayden White, Forum “The Public Role of History”, History and Theory, Vol. 44, no. 3, October 2005.

- Oropeza, B. J., and Steve Moyise. *Exploring Intertextuality*. United States: CAscade, 2016. Print.
- Rabiger, Michael. *Directing: Film Techniques and Aesthetics*. Amsterdam: Focal, 2003. Print.
- Salti, Rasha. "Foreign Nationals." *Encyclopedia of Prisons & Correctional Facilities* (2006): n. pag. The Danish Film Institute. Web.
- Sarris, Andrew. "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962." Web.
- Scovell, Adam. "News From Home (1976-77) And The Transience Of Family Chantal Akerman." *Celluloid Wicker Man*. 2014. Web.
- Simmons, Laurence. "Erewhon: Filming Nowhere." *Pacific Journalism Review* 21.2 (2015): 33. Web.
- Totaro, Donato. "Introduction to André Bazin, Part 1: Theory of Film Style in Its Historical Context." *Offscreen*. 7 July 2003. Web.
- Zeevalkink, Alexandra. "The State of Documentary Filmmaking in the Arab World." *DocGeeks*. N.p., 16 July 2013. Web.

## Sketches

These are the primary sketches of the premises of the “poetic scenes” accompanied with stills of how they were brought up to life on set. I derived these scenes from Salah’s character, body language, and his eagerness to perform. These sketches were brought to life on set, as Salah was introduced to them. Salah knew nothing about the premises, nor the idea behind this methodology. He was just asked to come to the location with his underwear, and interact with what is on the set instinctively without any restrictions. For instance, in *The Joke* scene, Salah was introduced to a scene that has a toilet seat, a TV screen on crates, and a light. Salah asked about the content and what he should do. My only direction to him was to express his opinion and feeling towards the news cut.



Figure 8: The Joke / Sketch



Figure 9: The Joke / Still

In another scene “Orange Peel Dance”, Salah was introduced to the set where oranges were placed on the ground in an arbitrary way. The film music was playing in the background. The only direction here was to ask Salah to interact with the music and to express his feeling toward the oranges. I encouraged him to feel free and own the space and dance if he would like to, and this is exactly what he did. Salah gave me what I visualized, but never expected.

*"I want them [characters] to do things their way. In some instances, the outcome is what I visualized. In most, however, it's something I never expected." -Stephen King*

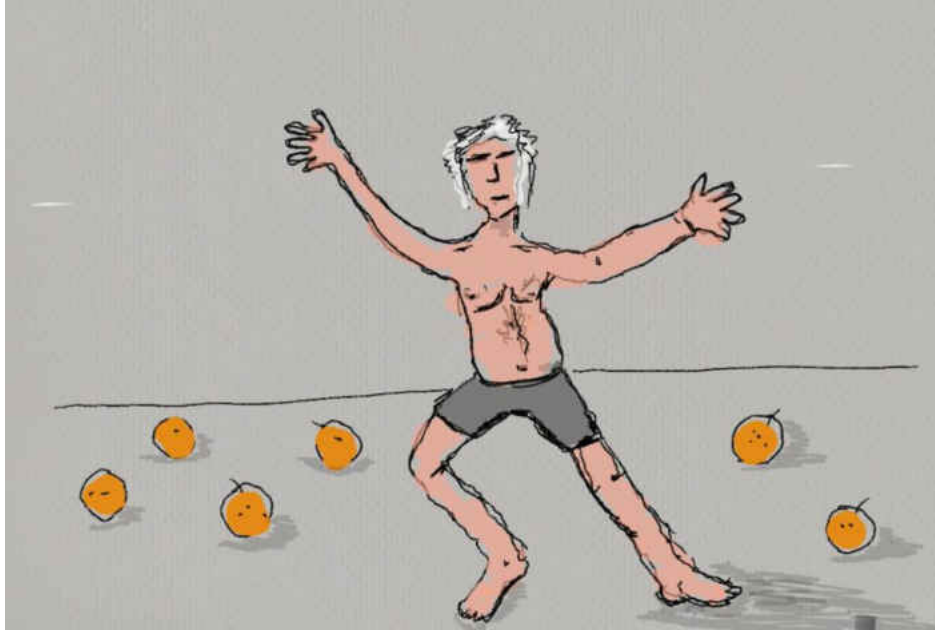


Figure 10: Orange Peels Dance / Sketch



Figure 11: Orange Peels Dance / Still

## Camera Test

Since I was planning to create a poetic and interactive film, I wanted to test if my aesthetic choice for the “poetic scenes” are going to be executed instinctively. During one of our earlier meetings, I decided to start a shooting test by using the basic filming equipment my cellphone camera. The moment was impulsive. I asked Salah to read a piece of a poem that was inspired by one of our conversations, and filmed that moment.



Figure 12: Salah and I during our first test session

<https://vimeo.com/210811645>

Password: POEM



The second time, I wanted the atmosphere to be closer to the film’s atmosphere. I asked Salah to choose a place of his liking. The video below called: *Soaking Dream*, it is a test scene that allowed me to understand Salah, his physical and emotional interaction with the camera, and his interaction with my DP and myself. This scene was repeated three times in different locations. The importance of the repetition of the same scene lays in the idea of making Salah lose his awareness to the camera as a medium. This scene was created as a fulfillment to one of his dreams while he was in detention. At that time Salah had only one dream should he be released:

*“ My dream was to walk the streets again and drink clean water and orange juice, so I can kill my thirst and memories of the filthy water in prison.” –Salah*



Figure 13: Still from The Soaking Dream

<https://vimeo.com/153462369>

## CHAPTER 2: EVIDENCE OF FINANCIAL LITERACY

### Business Plan

This business plan (the “Business Plan”) is for information only and is not an offer to sell, or a solicitation of an offer to buy securities. Furthermore, the entire contents of the Business Plan are confidential and the reader, by accepting the Business Plan, agrees not to disseminate to a third party or copy the information contained herein, in part or in whole, without the express written consent of KLARA HAMMOUD. This Business Plan is the property of KLARA HAMMOUD and by accepting the Business Plan the reader agrees to immediately return the Business Plan to KLARA HAMMOUD upon request.

KLARA HAMMOUD  
[83orangepeels@gmail.com](mailto:83orangepeels@gmail.com)

## *Information and Risk Statement*

### INTENDED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY

This business plan is intended for informational purposes only and is not a solicitation of securities. This business plan is not a prospectus and is not a private placement memorandum.

This business plan and its contents are not to be construed as legal, business or tax advice.

## *Executive Summary*

### Introductory Statement

83 *ORANGE PEELS*, a political poetic film budgeted at \$5,000. The film tells a story of a previous Syrian detainee. It shows the effects of torture and detention by exploring the fate of one man with his relationship with his memories, reality, family and surroundings. The film is written and directed by a Syrian filmmaker.

## *Product Description*

83 *ORANGE PEELS* is a micro-budget experimental documentary feature film. It is a theatrical stage for an individual story, but it tells a universal story about a Syrian revolutionist and his struggle to cope with the reality of the Syrian revolution and freedom after detention. It is an epic tale in which Salah becomes a metaphor expressing human dreams of freedom and the struggle to gain dignity in a country that under dictatorship. The project should significantly distinguish itself from past and future genre efforts in several ways as described below:

- 83 ORANGE PEELS is not a “found footage” or a “docudrama” film, which crowds the current genre marketplace.
- 83 ORANGE PEELS is written and directed by a Syrian woman and filmmaker where presently most of documentary films about Syria are produced by foreign filmmakers, who are mostly males.
- The film is shot digitally with DSLR camera.
- The film has the distinction of being the first Syrian film, where a real character “social actor”, is telling his story in an revolutionary and unconventional mode, through theatrical performances and undirected scenes. It is a challenge to the cliché presentation of detention and torture stories in documentary films.

## SYNOPSIS

“A journey through the mind of a previous Syrian detainee.”

*83 ORANGE PEELS* is an open stage for theatrical and poetical performance, in which the historical world of a political detainee is unfolded lyrically. Salah Shaar, 64 years old, is a Syrian revolutionist and ex-detainee who has dreams of freedom, but everything was shattered as the desired revolution was stolen by foreign agenda and the many domestic and foreign extremist groups. In 2013, Salah was arrested for 83 Days and experienced physical and psychological torture in Assad’s prisons and witnessed people dying under torture. Participation in the peaceful protests and providing the protestors with loudspeakers for their angry chants was enough of an

accusation to arrest him.

Through *83 ORANGE PEELS* the effects of torture and detention is explored by the fate of one man with his relationship with his memories, reality, family and surroundings. It thereby opens a small window on torture pain and scattering. It contributes hope by the very fact that the story is told.

### PROJECT DETAILS

*83 ORANGE PEELS* is an experimental documentary film where poetry and theatre become the therapeutic reflection of the past. It is budgeted at \$5,000 and targeted towards experimental, poetic, and political documentary film fans and audiences that support human rights.

*83 ORANGE PEELS* is not a “found footage” or a “docudrama” film. Films like *Standard Operational Procedure*, *The Hamburg Cell*, or *Taxi to The Dark Side*. Docudrama and found footage interfere in the audiences’ feelings and push them to sympathize with the story’s characters, even when the characters are terrorists, or serial killers. This methodology of recreating the past and memories is a slave of prophecy, and audiences are completely aware of the execution of this methodology ritual. The reenactment of the past memories and the recreation of what happened with the characters are considered a forceful way to move the audience’s feelings to sympathize with the character, and sometimes it affects the viewer’s watching experience, and this is not what *83 ORANGE PEELS* intends to do.

83 *ORANGE PEELS* is Salah's theatrical and real life stage, where he lives his dreams, sings, dances, cries, reads poems, laughs loudly, argues with his wife, and lives spontaneous and undirected moments. The film shows what Salah sees, hears, and feels. He lives his dreams and feels the bitter sweet aches of his past, and presents his memories about the glamorous revolution. The filming process benefited from an unlimited access to know Salah, and film his life, behavior, character, happiness, sadness, anger, memories, secrets, and dreams. Allowing me to have that exclusive access to Salah's life, is an expression of his acceptance of my method, his patience, persistence, as well as, his strong will to show the world that he has nothing to hide or fear whatsoever.

The film creates a world for Salah, a transparent world that unfolds in front of the viewer's eyes. Scenes are lived by Salah as he feels, they are spontaneous and undirected. This is the main element that distinguishes this film categorically. Shooting took place in Kissimmee, FL, where Salah lives and works, and in sound stage and sound studio at the Center for Emerging Media, Orlando. The film shot primarily on DSLR camera. We anticipated that the style of this film will trigger questions about the Salah's story and his past, as well as questioning whether the story is true or not, or whether Salah is a professional actor or a social actor. I believe that the uniqueness of this aesthetic choice that was adopted in the making of this film, will make 83 *ORANGE PEELS* stand out among the many documentary films that are coming out, and will secure us distribution.

## *Industry Overview*

The documentary film industry urgently needs fresh perspectives and alternative visions. From the mid-eighties onward, the Oscars mark the dominance and the ascendancy of the documentary as a popular form (Nichols). The digital filmmaking enabled more and more people to make films inexpensively, the market can get easily crowded, which makes it increasingly important to have a creative project that stands out.

Syrian filmmakers are used to produce films that will never be screened. Since 2010, and after the Arab Spring, documentary filmmaking activities in the Arab World region increased. The need to document and to find an alternative choice other than the biased and dishonest media, opened the venue for documentary films as an artistic choice. Thousands of activists, journalists, and ordinary people have filmed videos and challenged dictatorships by sound and image. Film festivals, production grants, and independent production companies worldwide created a unique platform to encourage professional and amateurs directors to not only document, but to be creative in the documentation. In addition to that, the need for free and fresh cinematic vision strengthen this industry.

In societies such as Syria, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and Yemen documentary filmmaking suffered from the censorship imposed on all creative sectors. Documentary film becomes an important tool in capturing the historical transformation that is currently taking place. Currently, the market is crowded, *The White Helmets*, *Silvered Water*, *Return to Homs* and many other successful documentary films about Syria invaded Cannes film festivals, the Oscars, and the

streaming services. This makes it more and more important to have a project that stands out in some way. Creative storytelling, structure, and unique marketable artistic vision became a necessity.

### Documentary Filmmaking Process

In general, a story in a documentary film goes through three stages to reach the final product: pre-production, production, and post production. However, documentary films belong to a much different workflow. Compared to a narrative film, the order of the filmmaking's stages in documentary films are jumbled and designed according to the filmmaker's style and many other factors.

In the narrative film the production stage cannot get started just with an idea, the situation in documentary filmmaking is totally different. In documentary film the story can be created in post-production and nothing have to happen all at the same time like it would on a narrative feature film. Digital technologies have forever transformed the way we produce, distribute, and consume documentary films. In another words, the low-cost digital production, the internet and its next-to-nothing costs of dissemination gave the documentary form a bright future (Nichols).

### Digital Revolution and Independent Filmmaking

Digital filmmaking has changed the way movies are made. It is a revolution against traditional methodology of filmmaking. It enabled independent filmmakers to be creative, blend art with their work, and speed up the process of filmmaking. It made it possible for independent



filmmakers to produce a film with quality at very low cost. Not only this, but it made getting their work out there easier as well.

The emergence of DSLR or (digital single-lens reflective) has greatly reduced the costs of making films. The digital storage methods last longer and cost less money than film. Film can be degraded overtime, it is expensive, and requires intensive care to prevent any damage, while digital filmmaking does not require such costly materials, and the overall investment has played a great role on the production and quality level. The image quality is no longer something that can only be achieved by heavy and bulky equipment. This development helped to bring new voices and energy to the documentary film industry. Now to make a film, a DSLR camera is all one needs. It can mimic the look and feel of those cinematic cameras at a very low cost that is next to nothing. Filmmakers are in full control over the composition of scenes. They can move easily with their subjects without being restrained to cables and heavy equipment. Instead, these digital cameras use light differently than traditional film cameras, and this helped to have a smaller and a more intimate crew. Especially in documentaries, intimacy is very needed between the filmmakers and their crew and the filmmakers and their subjects or social actors.

Contemporary documentary filmmakers live the “the revolution” of film postproduction. The process is less cumbersome. Non-linear editing, digital recording equipment, editing equipment all is affordable and easy to master. Computer editing programs allowed a filmmaker or editor to easily piece together an incredible amount of digital files into a complete work.

Digital revolution has also presented its benefits in distribution. An independent, or first

time filmmaker is no longer in need of a big marketing budget to reach a wide audience, neither is he /she bound to traditional distribution methods. Digital revolution provided them with self-distribution as an option. It is increasingly a practical option especially since it has greatly improved over the last three years. Filmmakers can now get their film on a digital platform like Amazon, iTunes, and Netflix. The initial goal of independent filmmakers is to get audiences for their films. These platform have provided consumers and filmmakers with the same opportunity of finding their niche. All of these changes have helped to make the process of making a film simpler, and gave filmmakers greater tools to create their motion pictures. It has opened up greater opportunities for filmmakers and helped them in breaking into the film industry. The only thing they need to do is to ensure a little success, which in turn opens the gate for their film career.

### *Market Analysis & Strategy*

Each year, the online market for film distribution registers a significant increase. Digital revolution played a great role in distribution and provided independent filmmakers with the ability to self-distribute. iTunes, Netflix, and other video-on-demand (VOD) services created an outstanding marketing channel for easy distribution. That is why 83 ORANGE PEELS acquired and generated a fan base before the film even was shot. We effectively used online marketing venues, such as, Facebook, Instagram, and our own website. We started building our audience base before the film shooting even started. Our online marketing campaign, depended on using our Facebook, Instagram, and our own website, [83orangepeels.wix.com/orangepeels](http://83orangepeels.wix.com/orangepeels). The many

different aspects of 83 *ORANGE PEELS* also create a set of opportunities for targeted screenings, public exhibitions and private online events.

### MOTION PICTURE DISTRIBUTION

We plan to play the festival circuit to attain theatrical distribution. We will submit 83 *ORANGE PEELS* to top tier film festivals in order to obtain distributor interest, as well as doing self-distribution and a national and international private screenings. Websites like distribber.com charge a fee to get independent films on VOD services like iTunes, Hulu, and Netflix. With the supremely low cost of the project, return of investment is very attainable.

### FUNDING REQUIREMENT

83 *ORANGE PEELS* is funded by Biddayat a non-profit civil company, launched in early 2013, to support and produce documentaries and short and experimental films, and to organize specialized training courses on documentary filmmaking. The total budget of approximately \$5,000 has been provided by Biddayat in multiple installments for each production stage.

### *General Marketing Strategy*

When discussing a general marketing strategy, we are generally talking about how the industry will work in favor of this film. For 83 *ORANGE PEELS*, the grantors Biddayat offers the first step to help us with advertising the film on their website and link it to different websites for film festivals opportunities. Although this would help us to maximize our chances to expand our film's community, its audience, and the internet exposure, we will not depend only on this

opportunity. We were and still working on both online and offline marketing. We plan to create local and national events for screening, and target audiences most likely to take an interest in the film. For examples, the film *Little Gandhi* (2016) adopted this methodology and built its audience who created an event in their local independent movie theaters requesting a special screening from the filmmaker. The overall goal with these marketing strategies is to initiate significant word-of-mouth. Once the word-of-mouth spreads, the resulting revenues can be used to pay for more publicity.

For 83 ORANGE PEELS reaching, involving, and developing audiences was a core activity since the beginning of the project. Audience is growing rapidly because of the increasing exposure and coverage of the day-to-day development in Syria in the world news. The communication and promotion strategy was focused on the following types of people:

- Media workers, Journalists, correspondents, etc. particularly those working in human rights and social issues.
- Artists who are interested in woman and human rights.
- Human rights supporters and anti-war groups.
- Documentary films lovers.
- Students and young people from universities and high schools.

#### WEBSITE AND SOCIAL NETWORKING

83 ORANGE PEELS launched a website with a link to our social media platforms detailing the entire production of the film, with photos, behind the scenes video, and camera

tests. These would be very technical in nature and a very valuable asset to aspiring independent first time filmmakers and micro-budget filmmakers.

### TARGET AUDIENCE & SPECIFIC MARKETING STRATEGY

In 83 ORANGE PEELS our marketing strategy is very unique. It depended heavily on a collaboration between the filmmaker and the film's character, Salah. As Salah owns a hookah café, he expects at least 30 people a day to visit his business. In his hookah café we practiced three kinds of marketing: word of mouth, direct communication, and online communication. Salah and I have made an arrangement to find, connect, and engage with the audience through evoking their interest and mobilize them towards seeing and supporting the final film by liking, and following our Facebook and Instagram page. The film initial audience is from Salah's hookah café, our film's events, Salah's contacts, as well as my own. These people are the core that resembles the magnet that attracts more people to the page. For instance, Salah invites his customers to like our Facebook page, and I invite people during social events such as, UCF Studio Tour, Aleppo Is Burning, Idleb Is Being Slaughtered events (these events were run by 83 ORANGE PEELS and advertised on our social media accounts) I also, communicated with independent filmmakers, who in turn invited their audience to like and support our Facebook page as well.

In addition to abovementioned, I benefit from the experiment of my filmmaker colleagues. One of them is a Lebanese filmmaker. In his film *Now: End Season*, he persistently followed the following rules for finding audience and marketing for his film:

1. Trailer: Trailer is an essential part of the marketing process. It is the film's identity that gives my audience a glimpse of the content and style. It is like an access pass to the audience.
2. Blog: Although I am not really a blog fan per se, I do realize that through blog I can archive and store important production data and keep track of the project progression. I use the Facebook page, and Instagram as a way to document the progression of my project.
3. Documenting Street Marketing and events: Recording and documenting what we do such as, handing out flyers, pitching our film in many occasions, and running events is a very important practice. It allowed me to review and document the progression of this project.
4. The power of the visual theme: Using a theme (the orange peels in my film) helps attracting people and giving the film a long lasting identity in the audience's memory.

### Word-of-mouth

We started by telling people about the film, and inviting them to like our Facebook page. Then we made posters and attached them to the menu where people see the poster while ordering. This method increased people's curiosity and opened an active conversation. People wanted to know more about the film and its story. Salah played a great role in the word of mouth

method as he invited audience to the Facebook page. Through this practice, the numbers of our film's community started increasing until we reached 1,088 people recently. Our initial marketing started by word of mouth, which was essential especially for the pre-production and the post-production phase. In addition to that, our friends, contacts, and volunteers are considered the starting point that would take us to a larger community. Shortly, we will open a special screening for a very limited number in Avalon gallery in Orlando and other private events for the American Arab Community in Orlando, Miami, and Jacksonville. We plan on using the proceeds from those screenings to pay for wider theatrical release in different states and film festivals. In our second round screening, we will focus on institutional screening, which means screening for high schools and universities, in addition to humanitarian clubs.

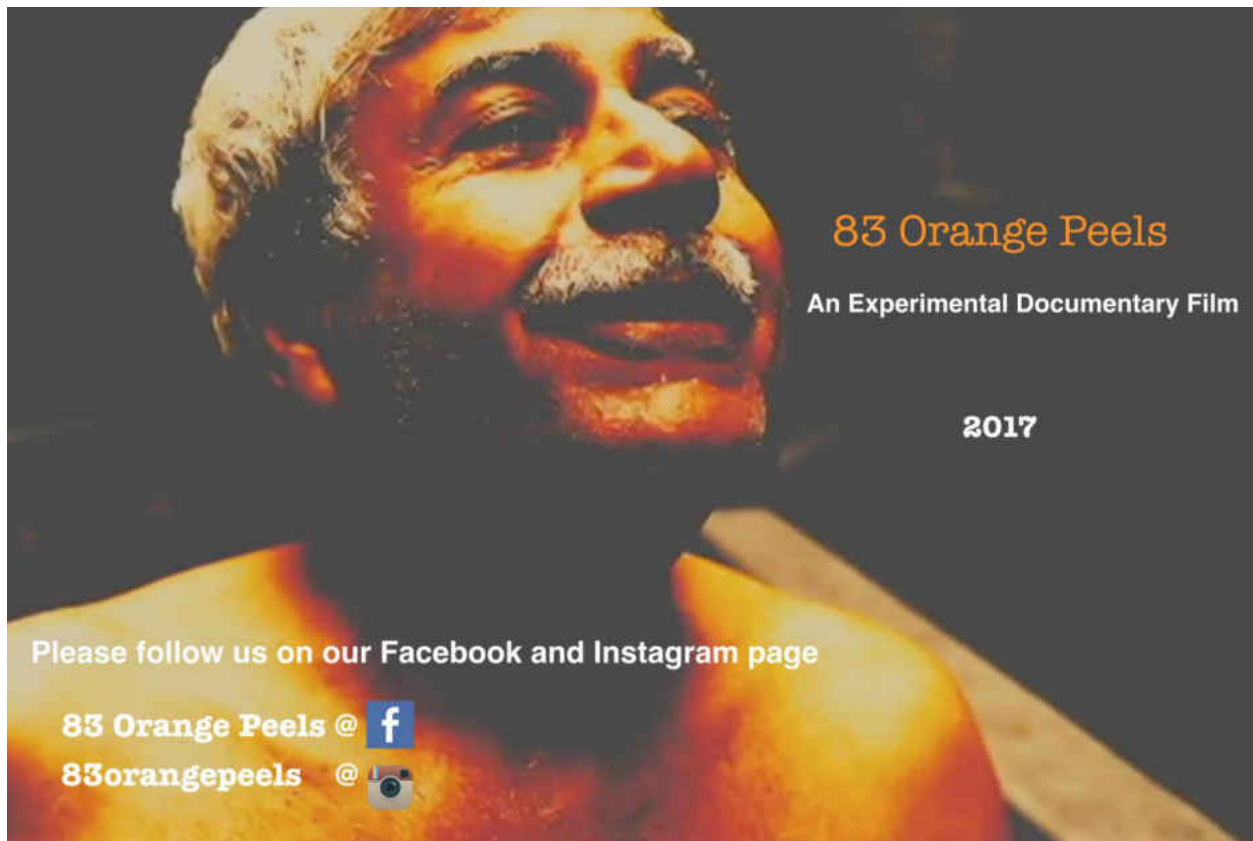


Figure 14: The poster that was attached to the menu

## Direct Communication

Reaching out to the local population by direct communication. This approach enables us to establish a close communication with local associations and networks to screen the film. Our social media already established 83 ORAGE PEELS community in Orlando and reached other communities in different states and countries. In addition to that, our volunteers in other countries are working on networking with people to establish a new audience, a direct and close communication with them in order to inform them about the film. Those volunteers are going to be our organizers for possible screening events that will take place after Aug 2017 in the UK, France, Turkey, and Germany.

We started by targeting professional audiences: directors, filmmakers, TV characters, artists, human rights opponents, anti-war groups, and producers and created a good connection with them.

During the last years, we started creating a bigger audience. We created connections with high profile names in the documentary industry. We are planning to have a special hard copy set of 83 ORANGE PEELS and send it to them, such as Bill Nichols, Usama Mohammad, Usama Alshaibi, Rokhsareh Ghaemmaghami, and Avi Mograbi. It is an opportunity that inspires us for another step in the distribution.



To engage more audience, we started to work on personal and social levels. We posted moments from Salah's daily life and political statements he makes which opened an interactive discussion.

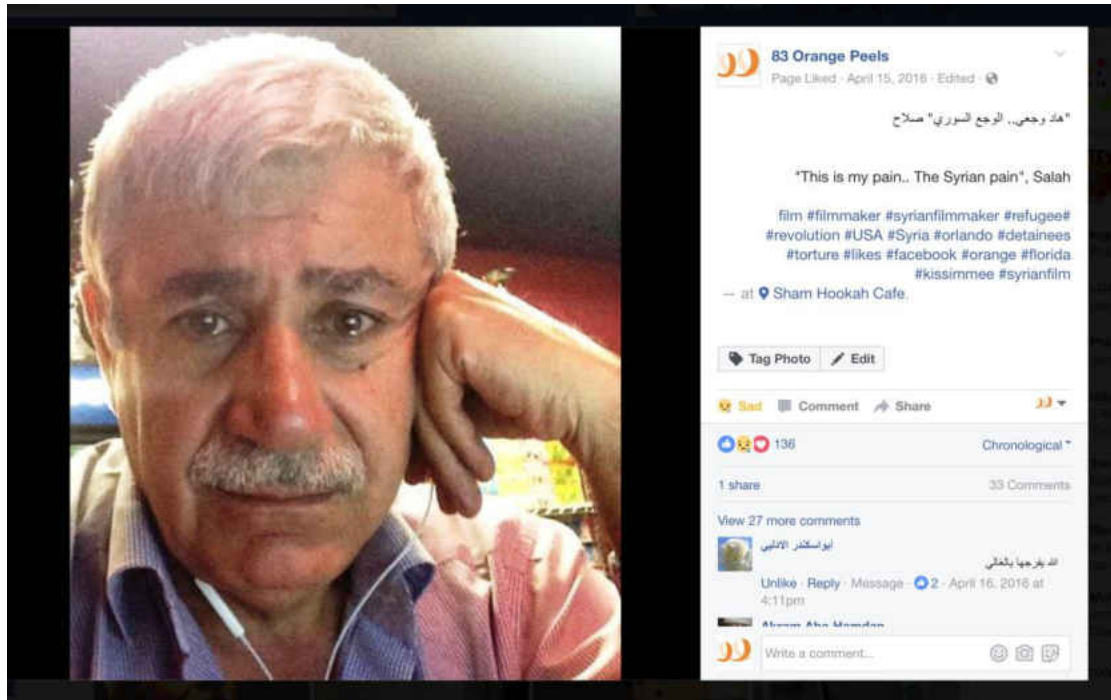


Figure 15: Facebook Activity\_Personal 1

As people online are hungry for a human connection, we celebrated special moments from Salah's life and shared on our social media accounts. This helped to engage the audience and create an intimate feeling to the page. We wanted the audience to feel that this page is alive and the posts are being run by a human and are not automatized and scheduled posts like posts on many other Facebook pages.

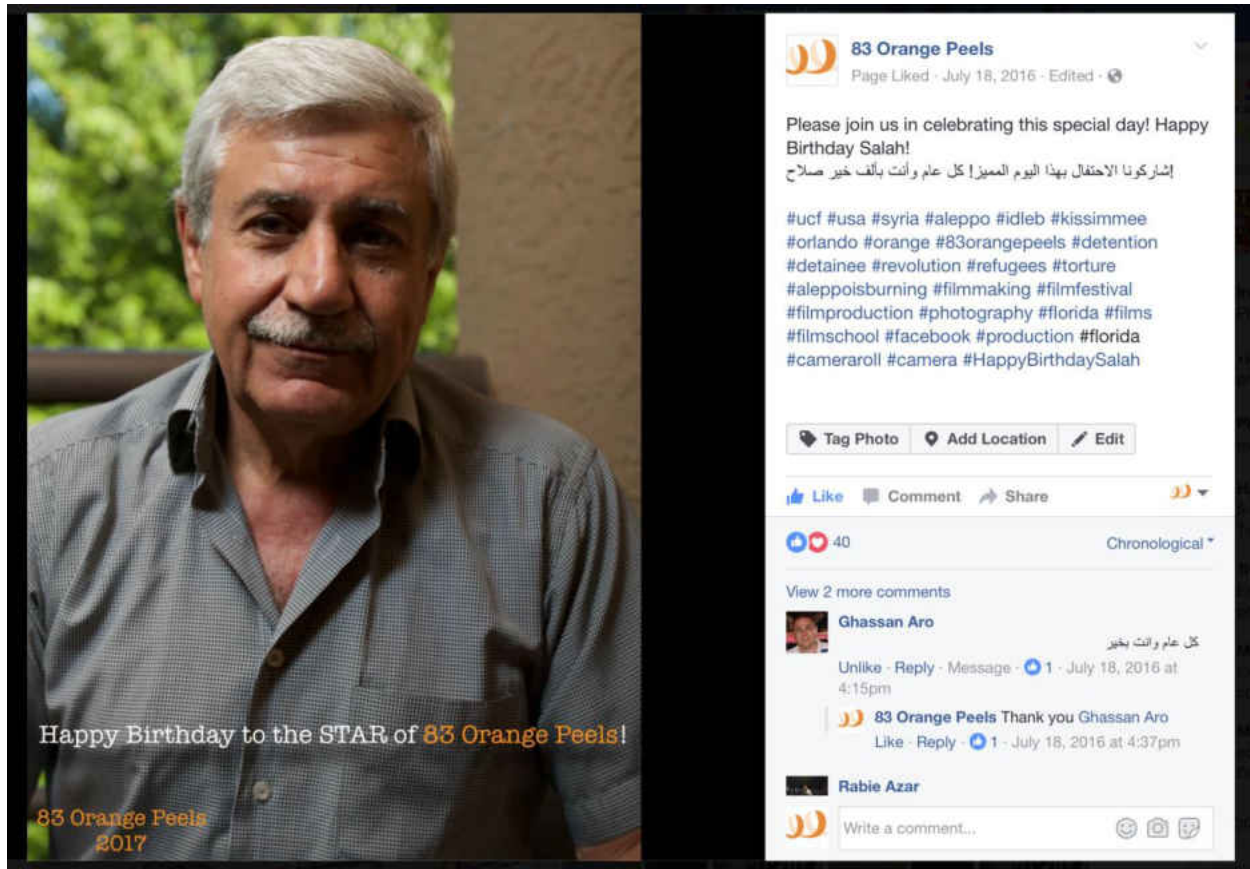


Figure 16:Facebook Activity\_Perosnal 2

Salah is very engaged politically. With all of what is happening in Syria, we tried to make our own events to stand against the brutality that has been practiced on innocent civilians in Syria. Events such as, Aleppo Is Burning and Idleb Is Being Slaughtered Silently are one of the main events that made us create new platform of audience.



Figure 17:Facebook Activity\_Political

I made an exclusive interview with the Syrian filmmaker Ossama Mohammad about the direct communication with the audience, and asked him about his methodology in targeting his audience:

*“Did you personally build your audience? If yes, how?”*

*“Maybe I built an audience through my uncountable meetings with the people. I do that before and after the screenings. I have never, and I won’t refuse any request from the audience to contact me. I felt that no matter what happens, I do not have the right to refuse. Of course, we are talking about a film that shows the people of Syria as martyrs. On a regular basis, I do interviews, and press and TV releases. This is the key.”-Usama Mohammad*

## Online Marketing

For micro-budget filmmaking, online marketing is where a filmmaker can reach and build the target audience. From our observation and experience with the social media accounts for 83 ORANGE PEELS, we noticed that our audiences are mostly on Facebook and Instagram. On Facebook they are having political discussions, sharing political analysis, political photos and videos, sharing political films trailers, promoting for new films about Syria, sharing news, and seeking information. On Instagram our audience is looking for creative projects, revolutions related projects, and photos / segments of the filmmaking process BTS. Our audiences on Facebook and Instagram are directed to the film's website where the film's information and materials are posted.

Based on 83 ORANGE PEELS Facebook page activity, I can say that my project is on the right track. I was able to build an enthusiastic audience from different nationalities. The level of people's activity, the number of likes, the number of searches for the film's name on Facebook and Google, are very promising. The posted test materials achieved a good number of hits. For me, the increasing number of the Facebook page audience was my initial success.



Figure 18: Audience's activity at the end of 2016

The figure below shows the increase in the size of the audience for Mar 2017. We now have 1,088 likes on our Facebook Page.



Figure 19: Audience's activity for Mar 2017

## Offline Marketing

Press release and interviews through local TV stations, radio, magazines, and newspapers are our desired outcome. This kind of advertising reaches many people who are interested in the film subject and are not a part of the regular movie theater audience. Our initial plan is to have private screenings for local communities, contacting universities and schools for institutional screening. Recently, we have been contacted by French and British independent art and film magazines for an exclusive interview about our project. I believe this is the first step to exposure.

## The Pivot

In the initial stage, we wanted to learn and understand the audience impression and how they interact with the marketing materials. We created a small survey at Monkey Survey.

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/survey-taken/?sm=yJ3LutFJUrM12qzkDSrk\\_2FmOi5f7Jk4fAV9ZHAnCkpt5M\\_2BySvUQhZief40LpIV1Qevjg02\\_2BxGle5NrHXwPimHA\\_3D\\_3D](https://www.surveymonkey.com/survey-taken/?sm=yJ3LutFJUrM12qzkDSrk_2FmOi5f7Jk4fAV9ZHAnCkpt5M_2BySvUQhZief40LpIV1Qevjg02_2BxGle5NrHXwPimHA_3D_3D).

The survey was sent to 15 people from different sectors and backgrounds. The results were:

1. Exclusively expressed an excellent first impression of the marketing materials.
2. Exclusively stated that they would recommend the movie to their friends.
3. Almost exclusively, all participants had stated very positive attributes to the film.

4. 55% rated the navigability of the website as excellent
5. 55% rated the website and the materials as excellent
6. 67% rated the interactivity of the website as excellent
7. 60% believed that their friends and people they know would support this kind of film.

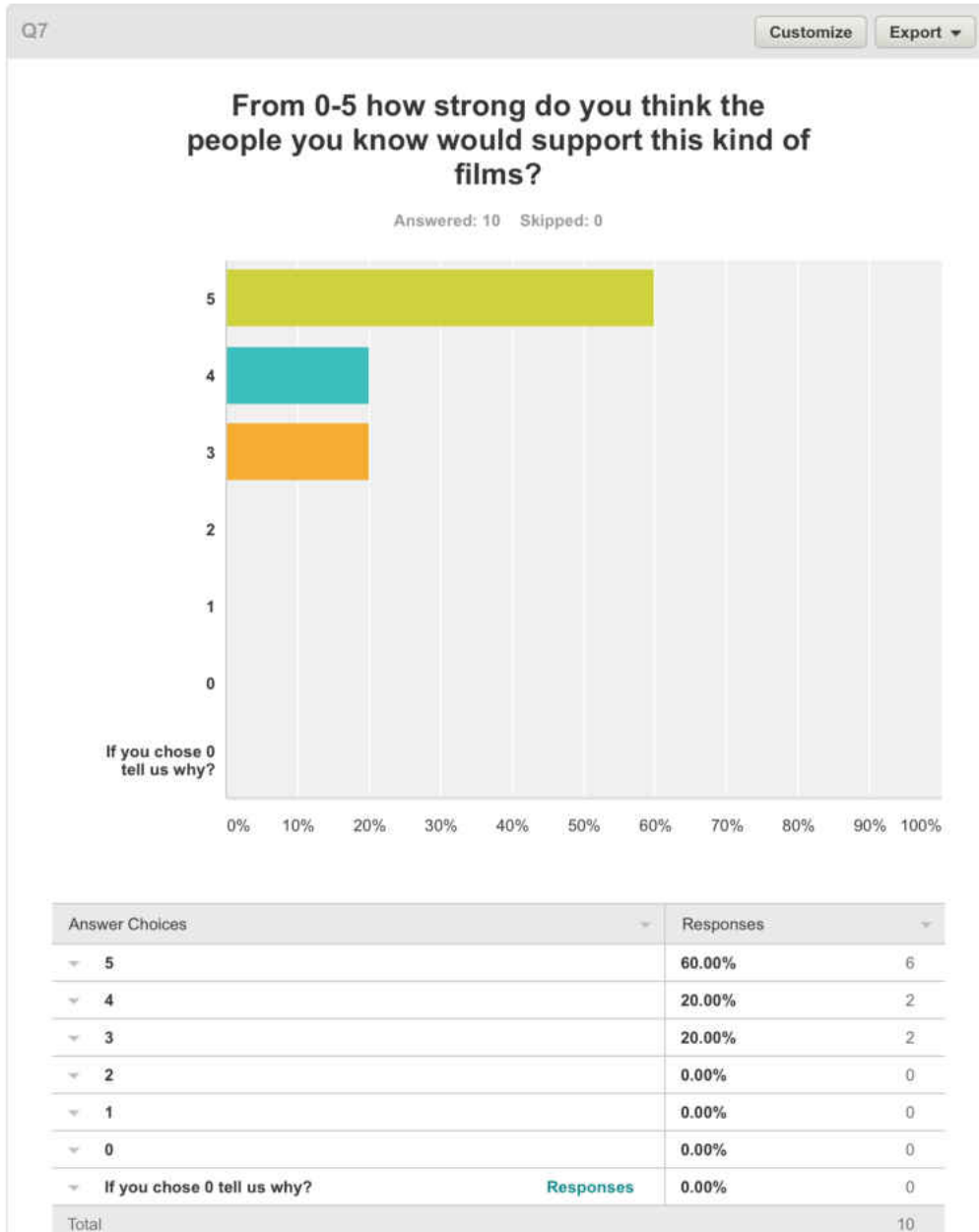


Figure 20:Survey Question\_1



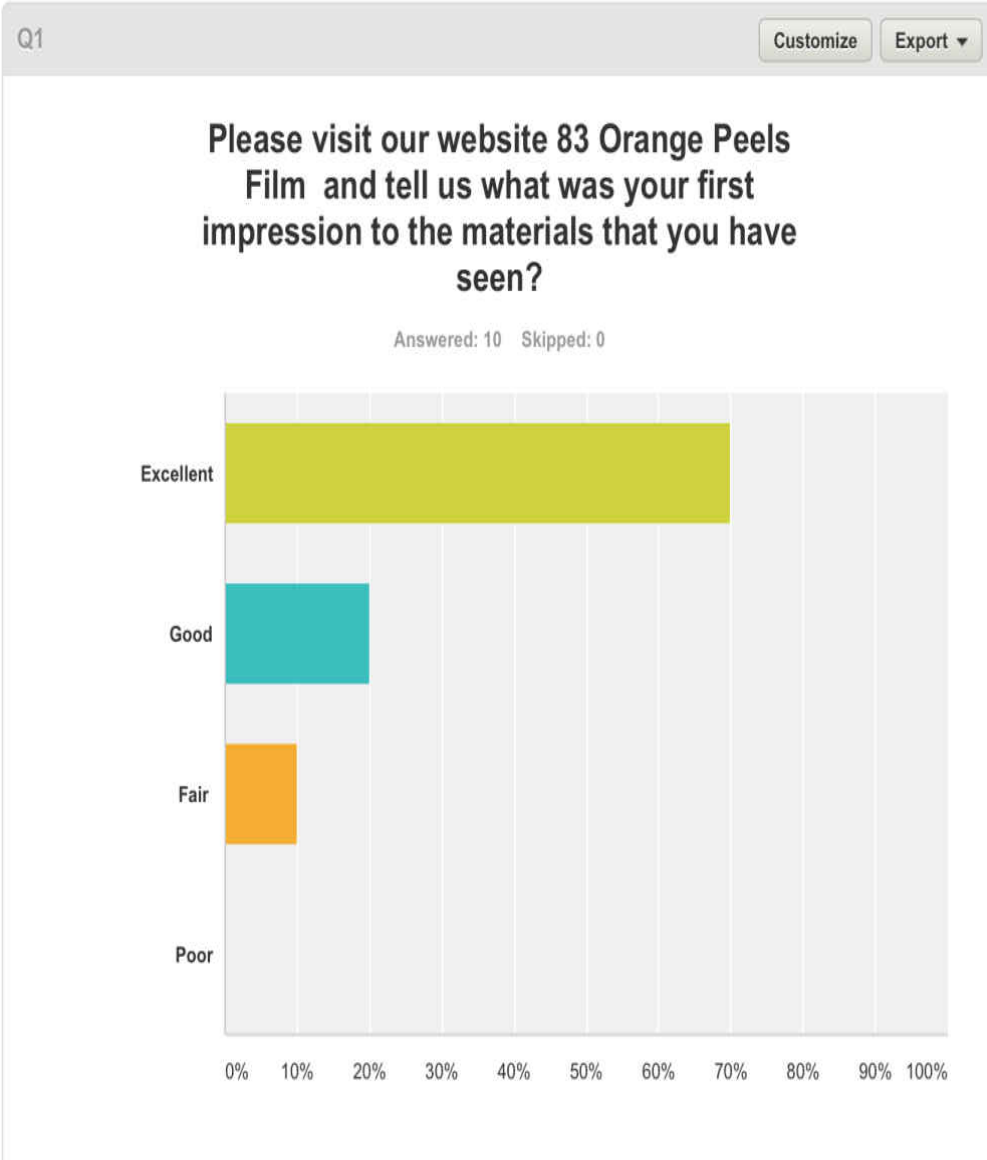


Figure 21: Survey Question\_2

Q3 Export ▾

## How would you describe this movie to your friends? ( Please be specific, not just whether you like it or not).

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

Responses (10)
Text Analysis
My Categories

**PRO FEATURE** ✕

Use text analysis to search and categorize responses; see frequently-used words and phrases. To use Text Analysis, upgrade to a GOLD or PLATINUM plan.

[Upgrade](#) [Learn more »](#)

Categorize as... ▾
Filter by Category ▾

🔍
?

Showing 10 responses

---

I have not seen it, in its entirety but I would describe the clips as intriguing and different.  
 3/14/2016 8:34 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

---

moments of suspense  
 3/14/2016 6:25 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

---

An untraditional, nonconventional, no talking heads documentart film  
 3/14/2016 11:50 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

---

Dark memory  
 3/13/2016 9:24 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

---

Refugees suffering.  
 3/13/2016 7:04 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

---

Depicts the cruel impact a human being suffers when subjected to torture and humiliation by those seeking dominance and control.  
 3/13/2016 6:54 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

---

Food for the mind  
 3/13/2016 6:05 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Figure 22: Survey Question\_3

## FESTIVAL SUBMISSIONS

There are many film festivals out there. The main idea for submitting a film to a festival is to distribute the film. The process of applying for film festivals can offer many opportunities, such as industry connections, and sometimes even a large number of viewers. My main goal of my festival strategy is the exposure, which in turn helps attach some sort of a brand qualifier to the film.

The goal is for this project to make it in to one of the festivals. If this happens, we will use the opportunity to intensify our networking and give out free copies of the film. The standard festival entry fee averages to around \$50 for features and \$30 for shorts. A portion of our budget, roughly a \$1000 will go to festival submissions. I am aiming to apply for grants or donations to help cover film festivals' fees. Though our goal is to submit to as many festivals as we can afford per budget, below is a list of film festivals (where some Syrian documentary films won prizes), which 83 ORANGE PEELS would greatly benefit from:

1. IDFA, Amsterdam
2. Dokufest, Kosovo
3. Torino Film Festival, Italy
4. CineMigrante Film Festival, Argentina
5. Arab Film Festival, CA
6. Berlin International Film Festival, Germany
7. London International Documentary Film Festival, UK.
8. BBC Documentary Film Festival, UK.

## 9. Iowa Film Festival, IA

### *Public Events Representation*

As I am using an anonymous name, I won't be able to participate in any festivals, press releases, or public events. Therefore, I hired a friend I trust to represent 83 ORANGE PEELS for any potential public events.

### Financial Plan

#### STATEMENT OF RISK

Investing in film can be a risky enterprise. Many factors beyond the filmmakers control could influence a film's financial future. These factors stretch from production to distribution. Films could fail to complete production, not achieve distribution, not receive the necessary publicity and lose to the competition, or even have a bad distribution strategy. The before mentioned could prevent the film from ever being profitable. 83 ORANGE PEELS is a low budget film, which means that it will have to face more obstacles to achieve the desired success. The risks associated with 83 ORANGE PEELS include failure to reach a distribution deal, incompetent distribution, market competition, negative audience response and a general market down turn. Any individual complication can dramatically affect the monetary value of the film, but taken in any combination these missteps could become catastrophic to the projections of this business plan.

## METHODS OF FINANCING

83 *ORANGE PEELS* is budgeted at approximately \$5,000. This amount was obtained as a grant from Biddayat for film production. We receive the money in three stages: pre-production, production, and post production. However, after the film is completed, additional funds may be required for finishing and festival costs, i.e. submission fees, travel costs, etc. There are a number of different ways we plan to raise this money. We have two donors who are happy to support our plan to submit to film festivals, another donor may screen the film on one of the cable TV stations in the ME. In addition to that we are going to apply for several funds for Arab filmmakers, and are hoping to generate some additional funds for festival submissions through private events for the local communities.

### Complete Budget

The following page represents the entire budget for 83 ORANGE PEELS, which chronicles all of the production costs. Our production for this film was very unconventional and our budget reflects the same. \$1500 budget will go for our marketing plan, this will be divided into two stages. \$1000 will go towards festival submissions, \$500 for DVD's, posters, and flyers. For now, any travel expenses will come out of pocket, physical media and online advertising.

FILM: 83 ORANGE PEELS	
KLARA HAMMOUD	
PRODUCER: BIDDAYAT	
BUDGET: \$5000	
FORMAT: DIGITAL	
CREW NR.: 5	
<b>Production</b>	
Filming	\$800
Music	\$400
Equipment	\$300
Sound	\$200
Misc	\$200
Subtotal	\$1900
<b>Post Production</b>	
Editing	\$1000
Mixing Sound	\$300
Translation	\$300
Misc	\$1500
Subtotal	\$3100
<b>Grand total</b>	
Grand total	\$5000

Poster Drafts

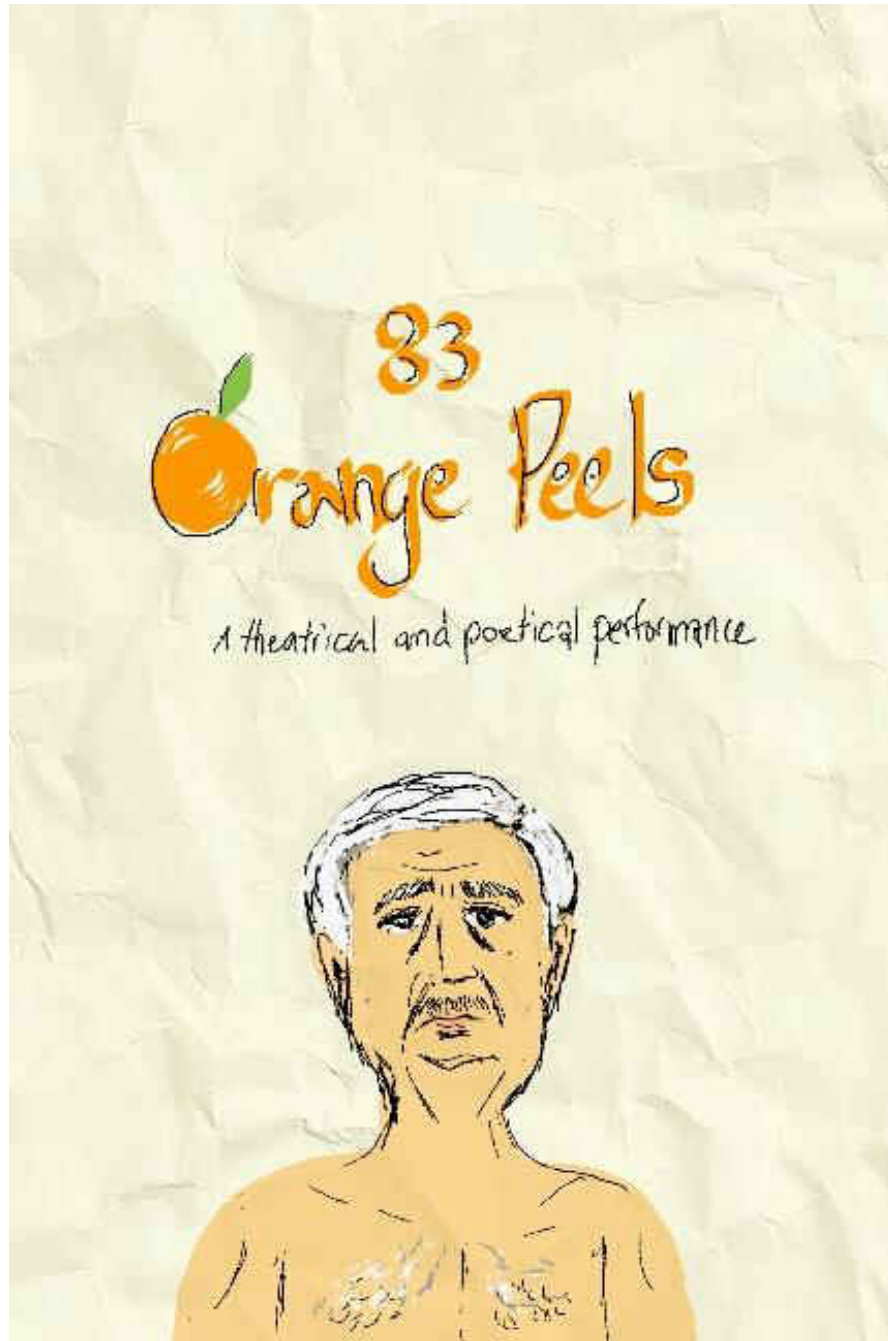


Figure 23: Poster Draft\_1

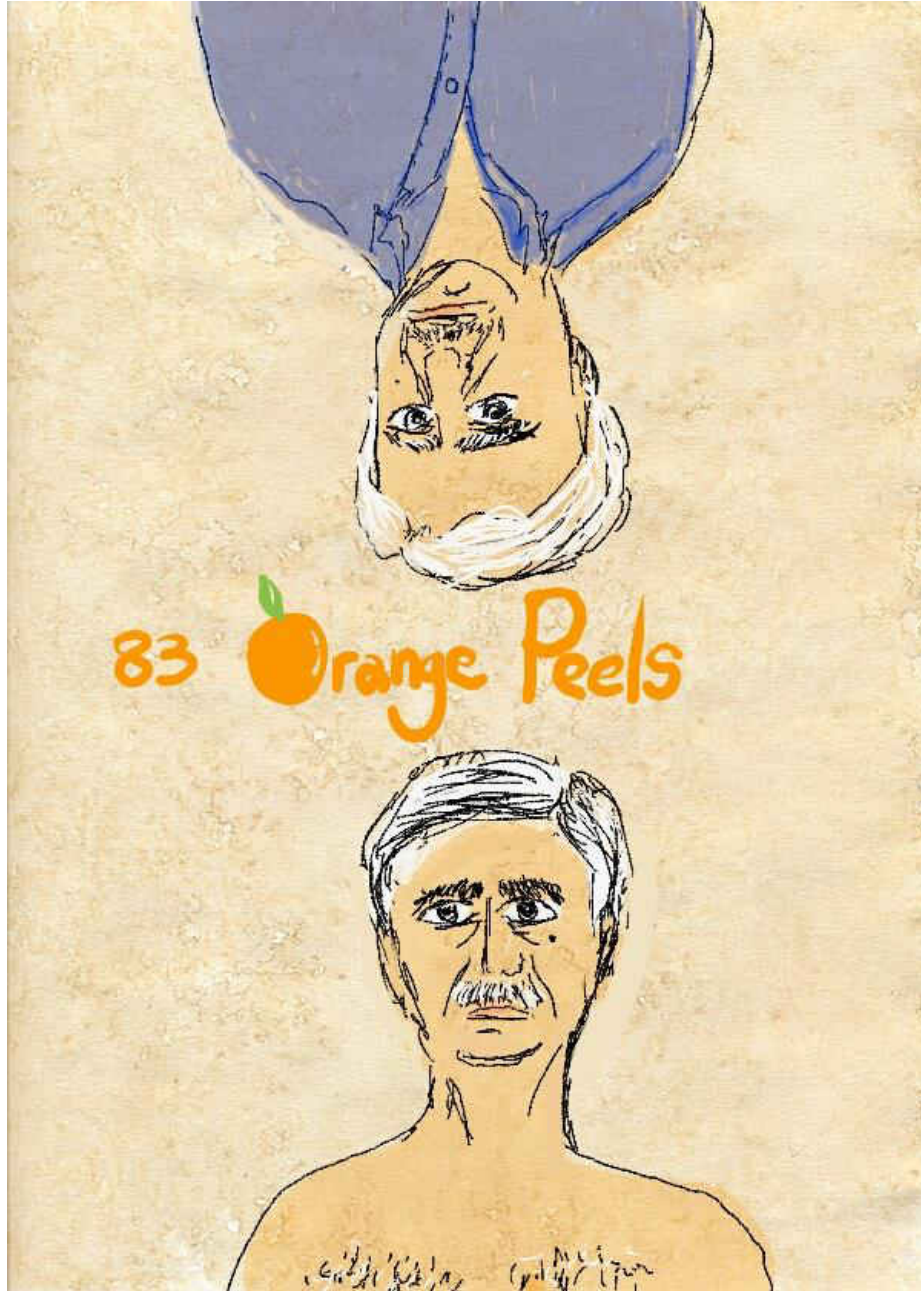


Figure 24:Poster Draft\_2



## References

Bill Nichols. "Introduction to Documentary", 2nd edition, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2010.

Usama Mohammad. Email interview. 22 Mar.2016

## CHAPTER 3 : EVIDENCE OF PRODUCTION LITERACY

### Production Literature Review

As it was mentioned in the Aesthetic Literature Review, 83 ORANGE PEELS is different from *Standard Operating Procedure*, *The Hamburg Cell*, and *Taxi To The Dark Side*. It is not *The Act of Killing* or *The Look of Silence* where the filmmaker made prioritized his agenda, while neglecting his characters' safety. Salah was aware of the film agenda from day one. He was clear about the process, the modality, and the production methodology. My crew were introduced to the process of production. Everyone was clear about the desired mood and the mode.

Since the film is about a humane subject, and it is a low budget project, the nature of the film and the financial limitations created specific rules for the production, and added challenges to the standards of production and post-production. The shooting took place in Kissimmee, FL, where Salah lives and works, and in sound stage and sound studio at the Center for Emerging Media, Orlando. The film shot primarily on DSLR cameras. During the production of the film, there were only three people working on the movie, camera operator, sound person and I. Having small crew helped me on both production level and financial level. In other words, having small group enabled me creating an intimate atmosphere for Salah and his wife to and keeping the cost of production very low. I encouraged the film crew to contribute with ideas, but ultimately I made the decision about what I like and what I dislike for the film.

We used Nikon D7000, Canon D70, and Black Magic. All our camera movements were handheld, I wanted to create an uneasy verite movements style especially for the “realistic scenes”. We are following Salah and his wife from one place to another, the camera was free to

move. Other equipment that we will use, includes an H4N audio recorder, and a Mac Pro computer to edit with, and Adobe Premiere Pro CC for editing.

I will go over some of the techniques and tools that were used by different filmmakers and which was applied in the production of 83 ORANGE PEELS.

### *Revolution of The Image*

Santiago Alvarez said, “The revolution made me a filmmaker.” (Malcolm) This statement is not rhetoric for Alvarez or me, because without the Cuban revolution and the Syrian revolution, there would be no new form of cinema from Cuba or Syria. In 83 ORANGE PEELS I am realizing a revolution in the making of this film where all production methodologies are simply directorial.

The young Egyptian filmmaker Sherif Elbendary said, “Every great event in a country’s history, whether it is a revolt or a tsunami, will have a powerful impact on its people.” (Bharadwaj). Here I want to say that the revolt does not impact people only, but the medium they use in their act of the representation of themselves “the production of the film” and their struggles. Today, we can literally do anything without constraints over the methods of production. Technical knowledge might be a limitation to achieve a certain level of quality, but the Syrian revolution helped the people “the maker of films” to overcome this industrial condition and create a new aesthetic quality.

*“What does it mean shaking the camera? Usually I do not like this effect in cinema. Suddenly I discovered that this shaking cadre is not a fake, the man who is filming is shouting ‘Freedom, Freedom, Freedom!’” (Euronews).*

The Syrian filmmaker Usama Mohammad portrayed the new aesthetic quality of film production in his film *Silvered Water*, where those technical limitations made the images seem deliberately poetic, and added the aesthetics for the films, as a unconscious reaction against an tyrannical establishment and a way to bring focus to the creation of the work.

The controversial and influential film movement “Dogma 95” that was formed by Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg has a strict and inflexible rules. These rules included that the camera must be hand-held, and special lighting is not acceptable (Langkjaer).

It is true that 83 ORANGE PEELS production methodology is flexible, however the above mentioned rules of “Dogma 95” are not rules that restrained our production methodology. It was the method that was adopted for the making of the “realistic scenes”. These two rules of “Dogma 95” had not restricted my film production process, on the contrary they helped me achieving the verite quality and creating my own production style that enabled me to reach the aesthetic outcomes of 83 ORANGE PEELS. The following are the method that was adopted during production:

- *One and only hand held camera is moving and following Salah in these “realistic scene” of his daily life.*
- *Natural lightning the only source of lighting in the “realistic scene” in order to provide natural condition to permit Salah to be himself rather than act.*

## *Production*

Some of the production style choices that were taken in 83 ORANGE PEELS are: using one small camera DSLR, shooting with hand held camera, utilizing natural lighting mostly and digital lighting occasionally, and using locations without intervention, in terms of set dressing (except the location for the poetic scenes), where they should give a theatrical expression, simple props was used, in addition to diegetic and non-diegetic sounds.

Shooting with one camera made the shooting process more manageable for both Salah and the crew. The size and the weight of the camera made the camera operator able to move without restrictions. For filmmaking about humanitarian stories such as Salah's story, I think that the size of the camera is very important. The size of the camera affects the character's reactions. The small size camera made Salah perform naturally and freely. A bigger size camera could have given Salah the feeling that he is under observation. Even during the first test shooting session, Salah expressed how the size of the camera became a part of his entrusted atmosphere, rather than a foreign object.

Using hand held camera allowed us to get faster reactions. Even if the camera operator misses the framing for a second, a quick turn of his waist can fix that in no time. This technique enabled him to move from one spot to another easily, and follow Salah's movements without restrictions, such as, moving and setting up the tripod. A technique like this was applied in *Chronicle of a Summer* and *Dogma 95* films. Sometimes, the camera resembles the thoughts and the sight, so we see the camera zooming in on Salah's face to show details, or zooming out and show the room and surrounding details, without any boundaries. This method shortened the

distance between Salah and the viewer, and created an intimacy as well.

The film was shot over the course of five days with a minimal crew of three, the camera operator, sound operator, and me, and a \$5,000 budget. The reason for this is to make the atmosphere less tense and more intimate for Salah and his wife. There were four locations, Salah's house, Salah's café, the warehouse and the sound studio at the Center for Emerging Media building, and Orlando Downtown. The four locations were fully accessible during the shooting schedule. Our first footage started with shooting at Salah's house. I chose that as our starting point in order to break the ice with the camera, make Salah and his wife comfortable to the camera exposure, and prepare them for the realistic scene quality. Most of these camera rehearsals are now a part of the actual film.



Figure 25: Still from The Dinner Table scene

To keep costs low, I used the location for the “poetic scenes” with its properties, as it is. For example, the warehouse at the CEM had variety of scrap and left behind materials, that were used for the set design, such as, toilet seat, crates, and even a dead mouse (which was utilized in the monologue scene). As mentioned in the aesthetic literature, I wanted the film production experience to help me making my personal and political statement (Kim). The film was shot digitally. Some of the scenes were shot by the camera operator, other scenes were shot by me. The poetic scenes (where Salah dances, sings, perform, reads poems) were shot by Canon D7, the camera operator’s camera, Black Magic and Nikon D7000, my cameras. The daily life scenes (where Salah is in house, cooking, arguing, smoking, etc.) are also a mutual production of the camera operator and mine. I shot the primer realistic scenes by myself in order to give Salah and his wife more liberty and prepare them for a new person’s presence “the camera operator”. Building trust bond with Salah and his family enabled me to roll the camera any time I want and capture anything, even their private arguments. The “poetic scenes” depended on Salah’s interactivity with the impulsive situations that he was in. We used Canon EF 50mm f/1.4 to help capture images even in lower light conditions.

As for sound, we used portable audio recorder Zoom H4N to get clean dialogue and space sounds. I did not use any lava microphones, because I believe that they may restrict Salah from acting naturally. Also, lava microphones may give Salah the impression that his voice is supervised.

I used natural light as much as operationally possible, especially for the indoors scenes. In Salah’s house, we depended on natural lighting, such as, light coming from the windows or from any other sources in the house. I did not want to impose unnatural lighting which would have changed the atmosphere of the house, and in turn affect Salah’s behavior, or encouraged

him to perform rather than being himself. For the poetic scenes we used both high key light and low key light in order to reflect Salah's moods. The outline color of the film is black and orange. As orange is the theme of the film, I wanted color to create an impressionist theatrical stage atmosphere.

The majority of the post-production work was for subtitling, sound design, and color correction. The subtitling task was a collaboration work between me and a native Arabic translator, while I handed off my color correction and sound design to a third party. I was editing and compositing using Adobe CC 2015. A lot of films at Sundance Festival edited on Adobe Premiere Pro CC as their primary digital editing software. This most innovative technology helped pushing creative boundaries. It is not used only by fiction filmmakers, but also by non-fiction, like in the documentary *Dream Is Destiny*. Premiere Pro CC usage at Sundance has increased 143 percent since 2015 (Price).

Adobe Premiere allowed me to have a consistent workflow between sound editing, picture editing, and subtitle creation. In addition to that, both sound design and color correction were completed with a combination of Adobe Premiere Pro, audition, and isotope RX.

### *Workflow*

If workflow is essential for narrative films, in documentary workflow is "life or death"<sup>1</sup>. A few realize that documentary films often take a longer time to complete than the typical

---

<sup>1</sup> *Douglas Blush* is an award winning documentary director, editor, cinematographer, and writer who has edited a wide range of major theatrically released documentaries. (oftwomindsmovie.com)



narrative film. For instance, *Finders Keepers*, took seven years to be finished, and *Grey Gardens* took two years just to edit (Carey). In documentary, building a story around all of the footage is the biggest challenge, and in the editing room documentary, a filmmaker is not only editing, but writing the film story. Here, the editor and the director start to ask themselves how to craft an unpredictable storytelling and a twist?

The first question we asked ourselves is “Where are we going to store all this material?” Having three separate external hard drives, one for me, one for the editor, and for the sound designer, backing up our media on each of the hard drives, in addition to saving two copies, was enough to make us feel safe and continue moving forward. Later on came the stage of creating a common language between me and my editing assistant. Naming the footage enabled me and my assistant editor to track media. This stage was a great opportunity that enabled us to review all the footage, and start naming it properly. In general, editors arrange footage in their library alphabetically. In *83 ORANGE PEELS*, we liked to name the footage by something related to the scenes. For instance, *The Coffee*, *Cooking*, *Orange Peels Dance*, and *The Joke*. The short title gives us a visual description of each clip. Most operating systems now use long names, but we preferred the short ones. Even though there is a lot of advice from editors to stay away from shorthand naming, in our case it was easier as we have a continuous long shot for each clip.

Aesthetically, documentary and narrative films have a lot of similarities in terms of story structure and character integration. However, the creative production and post production is very different. The screenplay in narrative filmmaking drives the creation process on set, and leads the construction of editing, whereas, in the creative documentary film, the out of control guides the

final film. The difference between an “informational documentary” and 83 ORANGE PEELS “a cinematic one” is the aesthetics. In the scenes, we created an emotional connection and a theatrical play of performance, visual, and aural components. For instance, in the “poetic scenes”, we used variety of different camera angles to ensure that a real physical space emerges for the audience. Modifying the mood, the story pace, and the factual flow, are all going to happen in the post production stage.

As it was stated in the Aesthetic Literacy, 83 ORANGE PEELS consists of two different sides of Salah: Salah’s normal daily life “realistic scenes”, and Salah’s memories and inner life “poetic scenes”. The post production stage is where these two worlds started to be intermingled and blurred so the audience gets to know Salah and both his worlds closely. All our footage and audio started inside Premiere Pro CC. One of the most useful and quick editing beginning is to take raw footage and piece it together in a timeline. For our film, post production was a very critical stage, because it was the time for us to see how and where to show the filmmaking process to the audience in a very realistic, yet an artistic way.

According to Bakhtin’s dialogic theory, the meanings are not fixed but open, and there is a perpetual generation of meanings (Phillips). The construction of 83 ORANGE PEELS is inspired by Bakhtin’s theory. In another words, if I apply his linguistic theory to the filmic language I can create a structure of a documentary film that is not fixed, but flexible and open to different meanings. This was the main intention during the film creation, and of course in the post production, making a documentary film that is not a cluster of interviews and footage that are arranged in a conventional way to educate and raise attention to a given subject. From the beginning of *83 ORANGE PEELS* production, the style was essential. We wanted to build a “Realistic and Theatrical Stage” and to deliver Salah’s experience and story through dancing,

reading poems, singing, and a theatrical monologue.

In the editing room, my intention was to bring a theatrical experience to the viewer through theatrical elements rather than cinematic elements. Theatrical elements were applied for *The Joke* and *The Mouse* scenes. For instance, I did not want to use the cinematic elements to create duration of time, because my intention was not to create an “impression or sense of duration” rather an “actual duration”. Some film theorists, critics, and filmmakers set rules for those filmmakers who wish to create the impression of equivalent duration. For instance the length of the shot should be the following: “twenty seconds to the dynamic long shot, fourteen to the close shot, ten to the static long shot, and six to the static close shot” (Mitry).

In 83 ORANGE PEELS I found my vision in the theatrical elements. They are closer to my intention in the creation of a real experience of time rather a sense or an impression. *The Joke* scene and the monologue in *The Mouse* are intended to have a minimal editing in order to create a real time experience. It is similar to the theater experience where curtains are the only factor that announces the beginning and the end of the scene and the duration between them. The time in theater is inescapable, you are entrapped until the end of the scene.



Figure 26: Still from The Mouse scene

The utilization of repeated takes was also another methodology that I adopted in order to bring people's attention to the filmmaking process and film as a medium. By foregrounding the film's constructed nature, I direct the attention to the medium. Showing repeated takes for the same scene, one after another, emphasizes the moment, the mood, the film machinery, my presence, and the directional choices that I made as a filmmaker. This also was inspired by Salah's character as he repeats the same information many times in different occasions. For example, we see Salah at the opening of the film smoking at the porch, we see his hand holding the cigarette. Same sequence was repeated again in another part of the film, this would call attention to the construction of the film. The construction is not arbitrary, it was also inspired by Salah's character as he repeats the same information over and over again.

I included images and sounds from the filmmaking process and the preparation of the scenes. Including these moments reminds the audience that even though Salah is comfortable in

front of the camera (as he dances, reads poems, argues with his wife, laughs, curses, and cries), he is a real character with a real story, he is not a cinematic, or professional actor. By adopting this editing strategy, the film becomes a real life art, as Salah breaks the classical rules of documentary filmmaking, and shows his interaction with the crew and myself. This strategy is similar to the editing of the film *Uncle Yanco*, the self-reflexive strategy (Koresky). In some instances, we hear and see the film's crew, in others we see the film equipment. In 83 ORANGE PEELS, we see the slate announcing the shooting of a "poetic scene" or we hear my voice off camera announcing the name of the scene to the crew.

Sound is also a very important component in the making of 83 ORANGE PEELS. The film opens with the sound of a lighter played against a black screen, similar to the opening of the Syrian film *Silvered Water*. In his film, Ossama Mohammed started with the sound of water drops playing against a black screen, then the film opens visually with a dripping water tap located in a balcony of a destroyed building. In our film, the audible opening starts with the sound of a lighter, then the visual opening starts with Salah's hand holding a cigarette, he is sitting in the balcony, smoking and checking the news on his Facebook page. After a while the same sound and image are repeated in order to intensify both the physical isolation that Salah experiences, and bring the viewer's attention to the construction of the film.

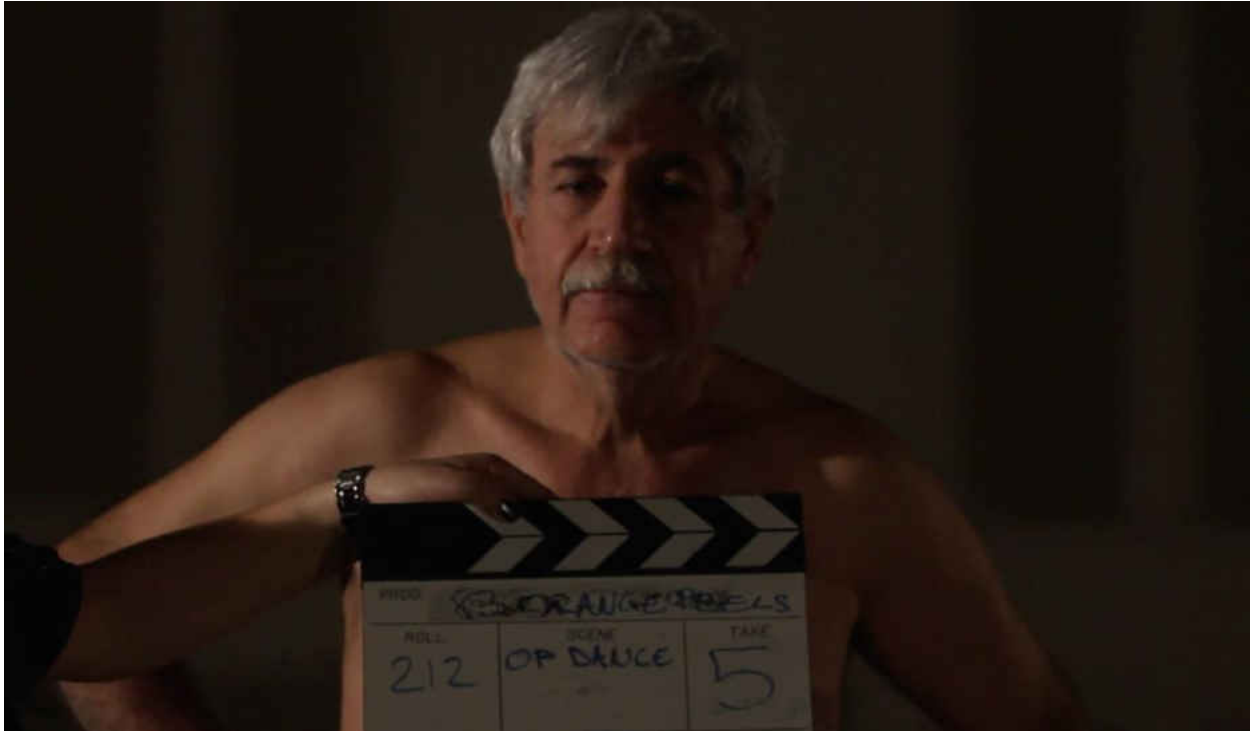


Figure 27: Still from Orange Peels Dance scene

During the shooting, a helicopter coincidentally flew by and its sound haunted the place. I seized the moment and interfered vocally by asking Salah to make a connection between the sound of the helicopter here in the US, and that he used to hear in Syria. At the end of the scene, we also hear my voice asking the camera man to cut, then his voice saying “cut!”. By using this method, we break the fourth wall. The theatrical and the real life stage start to unfold in front of the viewer.

Using long and handheld shots is also another practice to draw the audience to the filmmaking process, shortening the distance between the viewer and Salah. Actually, I wanted to mentally make the audience live at Salah’s house, make coffee with him, roam around in the small kitchen, and move with him as he moves. Using this technique with visual symbolism, are

is important in order to trigger questions in the mind of the audience. Salah is undirected in most of the scenes, and he is only introduced to ideas and premises, but he lives the moments, starts and ends the scenes, expresses his feelings on his own pace. Nothing is censored in this film, Salah is free to express his political and religious opinions and this also influenced the editing style. In another word, those moments won't be omitted or edited, and this methodology would make the viewer engaged and wonder if Salah is a real character or a professional actor, or whether he is directed or directing.



Figure 28: Still from The Balcony scene

In 83 ORANGE PEELS a minimal to none editing approach was adopted. In the opening of the *film*, we see Salah's face behind the curtains "prison bars", the shot is unstable, we see his bracelet, tears on his face, and a child photo on his phone. As the film continues, through the

cinema verite quality and the minimal editing, we are introduced the film. Salah is a normal person in a normal apartment, having his mundane routine of making coffee, and having trivial discussions with his wife until the question about Syria and the brutal war takes place.



Figure 29 Shapes juxtaposition creates visual vocabulary

Squared frames and confined spaces are another visual vocabulary that represents the emotional side of Salah and the restricted feelings. For instance, we see Salah showing photographs of his tortured body comparing between the past body, and the present body, then we see him directing a photo of his face towards his face. The frame of the photograph is followed by the exact framing of him inside a confined booth performing his story with the interrogator. By editing together shots with different and similar sizes and shapes, and with contrasted light, shadow, and color I was trying to restore the tragic moments, and give them a new meaning, a poetical one. This could entrap the viewer in the moments and give them the space to create their own visual content of the historical world of Salah. Not only the contrast of color and frames were achieved, but also the contradictions between sound and silence, higher



and lower sounds and voices, altogether were utilized to create a sense of time and deliver Salah's feelings.



Figure 30:Framing and Transition

The basic syntax of this film's editing is to construct symbolism that is dragged from Salah's surroundings, rather than using graphic and direct images. For instance, a blue restroom in Salah's hookah café (resembles that frozen memory of the blue reddish dead bodies of the detainees), the dead mouse (even though it is dead, Salah still finds it more free than himself), the orange (the desired freedom and the hope). All these symbols portrayed the memories without the need for any graphic footage, or to expose the viewers to any brutal clichés.



Figure 31: The Mouse as a symbol

In the editing, we cut from a normal day when Salah is cooking with his wife, telling her about one of the days in detention, to a long shot of him being naked, barefooted staring at the empty space. All of these humiliation methods that were practiced on Salah and the other detainees, such as, the moments when they were forced to go the restroom to see the tortured dead bodies shoved into there, or facing the wall for hours, the relationship between the symbol and the past was created during the editing to intensify the moment and give the space for the viewer to complete the story.

The transition in this film happens as if the viewer was dragged from one scene and to another. This transition helps the audience to live and experience how a detainees' memory can be triggered and bring vivid images. For example, in the kitchen scene, Salah is telling his wife about some descriptive details he experienced during the bus trip from his first detention in Idleb (his city) to the second one in Damascus, then the audience is taken out to another "poetic

scene”, finally moved back to the kitchen. This resembles how the past is saved in Salah’s memory and how he recalls it every time he is asked about it.

### *Sound*

Explicitly or implicitly, 83 ORANGE PEELS is a political film. However, to me the art of making this film is more important than the politics itself. Politics comes secondary. If I ignore the art value in the making of the film, and if I do not understand why people watch movies, then nobody is going to hear a word about the politics, and nothing is going to be changed. The art has to come first and it has to be a movie first, not a documentary (Moore).

Stereotypically, what is known about sound in documentary is that it is less obvious than the visuals, and documentary depends on diegetic sound mostly and non-diegetic rarely. The immediate and classic usage of visuals and sounds in documentary films is a system that prevents images and sounds from expression. My film *83 ORANGE PEELS*, is not only exploring a mental state of previous detainee and torture survivor, but also exploring the freedom of practicing uncensored filmmaking process and experiencing cinema as a medium with all its means, and sound is one of the meaningful ones.

From the beginning phase of the film production, we adopted a very basic and organic way for capturing sound on set. We used portable audio recorder Zoom H4N to get clean mono sound for dialogue. We recorded 99% of the dialogue in mono. In addition to that, on location we recorded a variety of sound elements to create a stereo mix in post-production. These include recording ambience, room tone, and environmental ambience. In post-production, experiencing with diegetic and non- diegetic sounds became a significant stage in my workflow. Through

sound, I wanted to practice my presence as a filmmaker who cannot reveal her real identity. Voice-over, noise, silence, and asynchrony are the ingredients for the sound editing for this film.

When it comes to voiceover narration, audience expects constancy and filmmakers use it for maximum control over sound quality. It is more than just a necessary concession to the needs of storytelling, it presents essential story information and restores a potentially incomprehensible scene (Jeffrey). In 83 ORANGE PEELS the usage of voiceover is totally different. Voiceover is not a resource of information or to educate the audience like in the educational documentary. Voiceover is one of the stylistic signatures, it was used sporadically and not constantly or conventionally as we are trained to expect from educational or expository documentary. Using my direct voiceover contributes to my film a radical personal tone and it undermines the “Traditional Voice of God / Voice of Authority” in documentary film (James). In some cases, I borrow Salah’s name and disguise behind it to articulate my opinion. For example, we hear my voiceover saying “*I am the bad man, the hero of this film*”, then the voiceover disappears for a while. This direct address to the viewer appears as if I were introducing Salah to the viewer, while in reality I am indirectly introducing my individuality as a filmmaker, and calling the individuality of the viewer to note my presence.

In his book *Notes on Cinematography*, Bresson states that there is no absolute value in an image (Bresson). This is why 83 ORANGE PEELS does not depend on visuals solely. Sound comes as the main base of creating rhythmic and non-rhythmic states combined with the visuals. Through visuals and sound editing, I wanted to break the mental continuity, the one that we are trained to bring with us to movie watching experience, and create a rhythm that is connected and

disconnected with visuals. In the *Coffee Scene*, where Salah is making his coffee, the viewer expects an ordinary scene, as the opening of the scene seems to present an ordinary day, the continuity of the sound, visual, and mental continuity is interrupted by bringing up a ringing sound which interrupts the consistency that we are trained to perceive and absorb. Thus, sound and image are some of the film components that engage the audience emotionally (Block). In other word, it helps the audience to live and discover the mental state of the character.

In my film, sound is an illustrator of Salah's mental state, a vehicle or an introduction to a poetic scene or to a realistic scene, or a total shift of the mood. In the same *Coffee Scene*, we see Salah stirring the coffee, the stirring sound captivates the scene, Salah spends few seconds sinking in his own world, gradually the spoon clacking sound will be blended with another rhythmic sound, which resembles the mechanism of time, memory, the sound of the road to the unknown (the journey in the bus).. etc. At this point, the sound works as a trigger to bring the viewer to Salah's mental state. In the *Balcony Scene*, we see Salah smoking, we hear the voice of his wife and daughter off camera drinking coffee and chatting, this depicts the isolation he lives in. In *Clean, Shaved*, Lodge Kerrigan depicts the character's mental state by using sounds. In the transmitter removal scenes, Peter, the character, is seen removing the transmitter from his head with scissors, and also removing his nail with a pocket knife, in each time we hear radio transmission sounds as he inserts a sharp tool in his flesh. The sound intensifies the viewer's perception of the character's mental state that he is experiencing in the moment.

My filmmaking style communicates ideas through a cinematic language "the sound". Asynchrony or de synchronization sounds and visuals, and mixing different sounds are used for

certain moments and specific purposes, such as, exploring Salah's mental state "inner world", communicating with the audience, and inviting them to build their own image that is triggered by the sound. In his film, *La Jette* Chris Marker used sound to create the film's pace and rhythm. The film was composed entirely of still shots, however the sound editing created the movement. Other experimental filmmakers, such as Hollis Frampton in his film *Nostalgia*, explored the complex relationship between sound and image. Inconsistency between sound and visuals is the foundation for Frampton's *Nostalgia*, he examines themes of temporality and movement. While in *Critical Mass*, the asynchrony between sounds and visuals symbolizes the conflict and lack of harmony in the relationship between the two characters.

In the opening scene, we see Salah in the balcony immersed into his phone. We hear the sound of his cigarette burning, his breath, and the sound of the clicking of his phone. Adding non-diegetic sounds to this scene invites audience to the details. The very organic sound in the opening scene of the airplane interrupts the monotone state of the scene; Salah smoking and checking his phone. The sound may resemble many significations to the viewer, it could be the increase, the clash, the chaos in the character's mental state, or it could be a potential danger. In another scene, which is similar to the opening scene, all of the non-diegetic sounds disappear and Salah is blended with his own world and the total isolation. The sounds create and increase the visual, the aural, and the emotional intensity and through abstract sounds, the viewer enters Salah's mind and experiences his mental state. Also the sound used to establish the mood of the coming scene or to suggest a change of location.

Even though *Dogma 95* states that sound must never be produced apart from the images or vice versa (Trischak), in 83 *ORANGE PEELS* I broke this rule. Sound is created and used as an expressionistic medium whenever I as a filmmaker saw it fit. For instance, we see a skylight and we hear the sound of wind. This image was produced apart from the sound, but in post-production they were put together to play a synonymic role and to create an expression. A confined room visually and aurally. As words do to the spirit of a creative writer, I want images and sounds to present themselves spontaneously to the viewer's eyes and ears (Bresson). In 83 *ORANGE PEELS*, the impulsive noise is used for the sake of the rhythm. The noise of the adjustment of the camera, adjusting the tripod, the knife cutting, or food simmering, creates the desired poetic rhythm for this film. In addition to noise, silence is another value. The scene of *The Blue Room* is where silence tells more than words and sound. Although the silence is not clean, it resembles the isolation and the state of coma Salah was feeling when he was forced to face the wall for hours.

Through sound I am giving the audience the means to shape their own expectation as to what is going to happen next in the film. This concept is similar to what Mekas did in his film *Lost Lost Lost*, where he challenged the dominant aesthetic of abstraction and formal experimentation within the avant-garde community, in addition to the audience's expectations from the artwork in favor of his own personal documentary style (James).

### *Music*

In a narrative film there is more often a clearer sense of what emotion the director wants to deliver in the scene is. It is often more clear how the characters feel and where and when to support that emotion with music. While, in a documentary film, choosing and using music is

crucial, because music could play with, or against the film. In other words, if music is misused, it could be received as a instrument to manipulate the audience, and this could create a distrust by the audience. Good music could connect the audience and engage them with certain issues, moments, and people. It could also let the subject stands on his/her own.



Figure 32 83 ORANGE PEELS Music Theme

[https://www.youtube.com/edit?video\\_id=PVXM7zeRRBw&video\\_referrer=watch](https://www.youtube.com/edit?video_id=PVXM7zeRRBw&video_referrer=watch)

In 83 ORANGE PEELS music is a big part of the filmmaking process. It is a powerful emotional tool. Typically image and sound are primary, but in 83 ORANGE PEELS I wanted the music to be at the same level of importance. From the pre-production stage, I knew what mood and tone I want to portray in the film. I was able to interpret the mood to the composer through



sketches that depicted the general mood of the film.

Through music, audience witnesses Salah's ups and downs, his mood changes from exhilaration to depression, and from depression to sarcasm. In addition to that, I wanted to create a rhythmical relationship between the music and the film. During editing, I utilized music that blends well with the pace of the film, because through blending the filmmaker is able to garner a much deeper emotional response (Paul).

Like in the film *Cartel Land*, music was used to create a pace and highlights the dangers and violence. For example, we see Salah walking on a wooden bridge, and we hear the music mimicking the pace of his steps, or resembling the pace of the moment when the arrest took place in his attic. The rhythm is mirroring the process of memory. Hurtful moments do not rise only as a quick flashbacks 'like a glimpse', but also as a slow heavy blurry pace. Music and visuals in the attic scene played a great role in depicting that dramatic moment.

In 83 ORANGE PEELS, music is not only a transitional device between scenes, but also a dramatic one. This is similar to the mood underscore but with the addition quality of being closely matched to the action. It was specifically created to match the 'poetic scene' and the story in it. For instance, when he was recalling the torture, the music in the poetic scene created the intensity and reflected the brutal action of that past.

I did not want to use any royalty free music from any music platform, I wanted to create my own music because music is the film's language. In my film, imposing different music could have created different feeling or taken the film to the "begging for emotion" state, and this is very critical for me. It was a challenge to use violin, because the stereotypical concept about violin music is sadness. The music professor Noa Kageyama explains how music produces

emotional reactions, and how it is similar to storytelling:

*“The way this is done in music, is much like it is done in storytelling. By leading the listener down a path...Creating an expectation of where the path is likely to go...Building up the anticipation...And heightening the suspense...and delaying the inevitable...wait for it...wait for it.....before finally revealing that their expectations were right. Or instead...by surprising the listener! Setting them up to expect a particular resolution, but revealing something way cooler instead. Something that they didn't see coming. What's really intriguing about all of this is that the key part of the music listening experience may not be just the emotional high points per se, but in the build-up which leads to those moments.”(Kageyama)*

### *Subtitling*

Foreign filmmakers strive to ensure that their foreign films secure a larger audiences in the United States, but not at the cost of the artistic value of the film. Even though in 83 ORANGE PEELS, language is not an essential part of the tone and the structure of the film, the success of any film depends on its reception. Within this context, translation makes a foreign film accessible to international audiences. Needless to say, the main function of subtitles is to make films accessible to all audiences, and thereby overcome the linguistic barrier. The general practice of the production and layout of subtitles aimed to provide maximum appreciation and comprehension of the target film as a whole by maximizing the legibility and readability of the inserted subtitled text (Karamitroglou).

The biggest challenge of 83 ORANGE PEELS, in production and post production, is the “language”. Before dealing with conveying the content to the non- Arabic speakers audience, our

camera operator, who is also my assistant editor, is not an Arabic speaker either. In production, he was able to overcome the language barrier and track Salah by following his body language. In post production, the story was different as comprehending the language becomes a necessity in order to discuss the lingual content before the visual one.

Therefore, our workflow process started with translating and subtitling the raw footage. I started by reviewing, transcribing, and translating the footage. I sought assistance from an Arabic English translator in order to give a local spirit to the subtitles. Certainly, my subtitling workflow was not a process of just creating titles, inserting the subtitling directly into video materials, and dropping them into a rough build. I faced several issues during this process, such as, timing and actually getting the words onto the screen, in addition to the dissimilar linguistic structure between the source and target languages.

But before going into my workflow on subtitle, what is subtitling? Subtitling may be defined as “a translation practice that consists of presenting a written text, generally on the lower part of the screen, that endeavors to recount the original dialogue of the speaker” (Diaz & Remael). According to the translation scholars Ivarsson, subtitles were first seen in 1903 in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. From the year 1927 on and with the invention of sound film, the audience could hear the actors, so the titles inserted between scenes disappeared. However, making several language versions, or having the film dubbed in another language was an expensive and complicated technique. From here the idea of using titles as before and inserting them in the picture became what we now call “subtitles”. This technique is not only affordable, it is also the preferred method as it preserves the spirit of the target language.

“The first attested showing of a sound film with subtitles was when *The Jazz Singer* opened in Paris, on January 26, 1929, with subtitles in French. Later that year, Italy followed suit, and on August 17, 1929, another Al Jolson film, *The Singing Fool*, opened in Copenhagen, fitted with Danish subtitles” (Gottlieb).

Subtitling is a mean to overcome linguistic barriers between nations. That is why large satellite broadcasting companies around the European continent have already stressed the need for a unifying code of subtitling practices, a code that would enable them to reach the various individual country audiences through a unique set of subtitling standards that would not violate the already established conventions within the various countries (Karamitroglou).

#### 1. Subtitles codes and position

There are various subtitling practices and guidelines around the countries. However, from the earliest time, the positioning of subtitle was placed at the lower part of the screen in western countries. The reason behind that position is to cover an area which is usually occupied by image action, as this area has the lesser importance to the general aesthetic appreciation of the target film. According to Karamitroglou, the lowest line of the subtitles should appear at least 1/12 of the total screen height above the bottom of the screen, so that the eye of the viewer does not have to travel a long distance towards the lowest part of the screen to read it. The human social viewing behavior, the human physiological eye movement, and brain function, are sound enough to provide the basis for such an initial attempt.

According to many practices and guidelines, such as BBC and CBC, the subtitled text should be presented centered on its allocated line. This is because most of the image action circulates around the center of the screen. This position enables the eye of the viewer to travel a shorter distance in order to reach the start of the subtitle. One role about subtitles' position that all guidelines emphasized on is to avoid obscuring important information, such as mouths, covering the face (BBC Subtitle Guidelines).

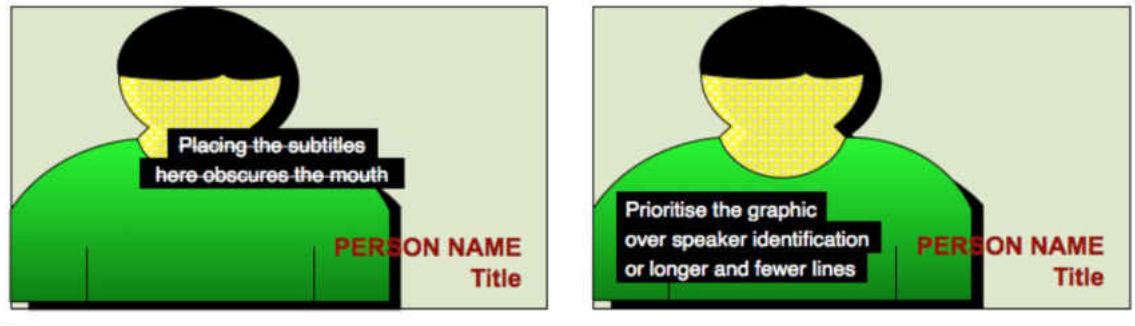


Figure 33 BBC Subtitle Guidelines

Jan Ivarsson and Marry Carroll who are translation scholars specialized in the field of audiovisual translation, put together a code of good subtitling practice. According to them, regardless of the medium, a subtitler normally translates and formulates subtitles in accordance with three rhythms:

- The visual rhythm of the film as defined by the cuts.
- The rhythm of the actors' speech.
- An audience reading rhythm.

At first, I realized my attempt or “desire” to break the established convention of subtitling is going to be impossible without causing some instability for the receivers. Later on, and after few screening tests, I realized that breaking the rules of subtitling and creating my own will be gradually accepted. Therefore, I replaced the old practices. Subtitles are not set in stone and they are all open to debate, changes and modification. In some languages, for example, Japanese, the cinema subtitles are presented vertically on the right-hand side of the screen. In the film *Jiro Dreams Of Sushi* subtitles were used in an unconventional way too, subtitles appear over the speaker which force the viewer’s eye to move away from the traditional position. Therefore, I found that challenging the conventional method of subtitling position will trigger a debate and reflection.

During their conversations and discussions, Salah and Amal interrupt each other or speak over each other. This was another challenge for the subtitling timing and positioning. Therefore, position choice of the subtitles emerged out of technical and aesthetical necessity:

- On the technical side, because when dialogue between Salah and Amal is very fast and sufficient time is not available for each speaker to have their caption, I found that the placement would help me indicating who is speaking. Traditionally subtitles are in the middle of the screen, I found that this method would not allow the audience to have enough time to read. It would be flashing subtitles that would put the viewer off.

- Aesthetically, the nature and style of 83 ORANGE PEELS determined the nature of subtitling and called for a creative style. Salah and Amal are paradoxical characters. He is a revolutionary, talkative character, while she is rather silent, comparatively speaking. For the film, subtitling becomes an optical ornamentation and a reflection of the revolutionary style. It is not only a text imposed directly onto the screen, but a part of the atmosphere and the frame itself. A frame not only containing the action, but also the original linguistic meaning, which becomes a part of the frame.

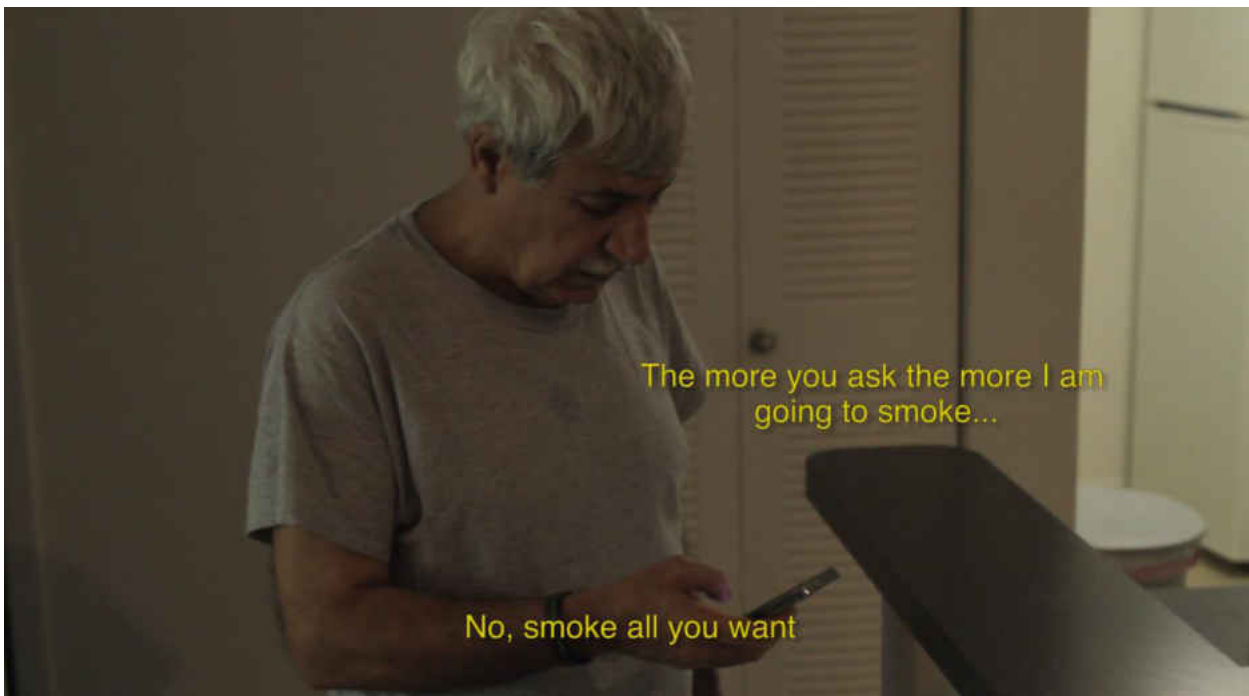


Figure 34:Subtitle Positioning\_1

The inserted subtitles in the frames became a part of the set. We see the subtitle engraved on the closet in the kitchen, or in the ambiguous horizon, and sometimes they are a part of Salah's body. However, they are fitted by means to ensure that they are in the right length and

came in the right place. This is not a classical "found footage" film, but a classic and a stereotypical story about torture and detention that is presented in a revolutionary style, which resembles the meaning of the Syrian revolution. Revolution against restrictions, regime, and for the freedom of expression and speech, and this is what the subtitles is reflecting.

In order for the audience to recognize and identify who is saying what in the film, Salah's subtitles are going to be all over the frame, while Amal's subtitles are going to be in the lower part of the screen. The style of the subtitles reflects and resembles Salah's revolutionary character. On the other hand, Amal's subtitle reflects her position and fear of change and the revolution. The style of 83 ORANGE PEELS subtitles would make the viewer able to watch and read in a very balanced way.

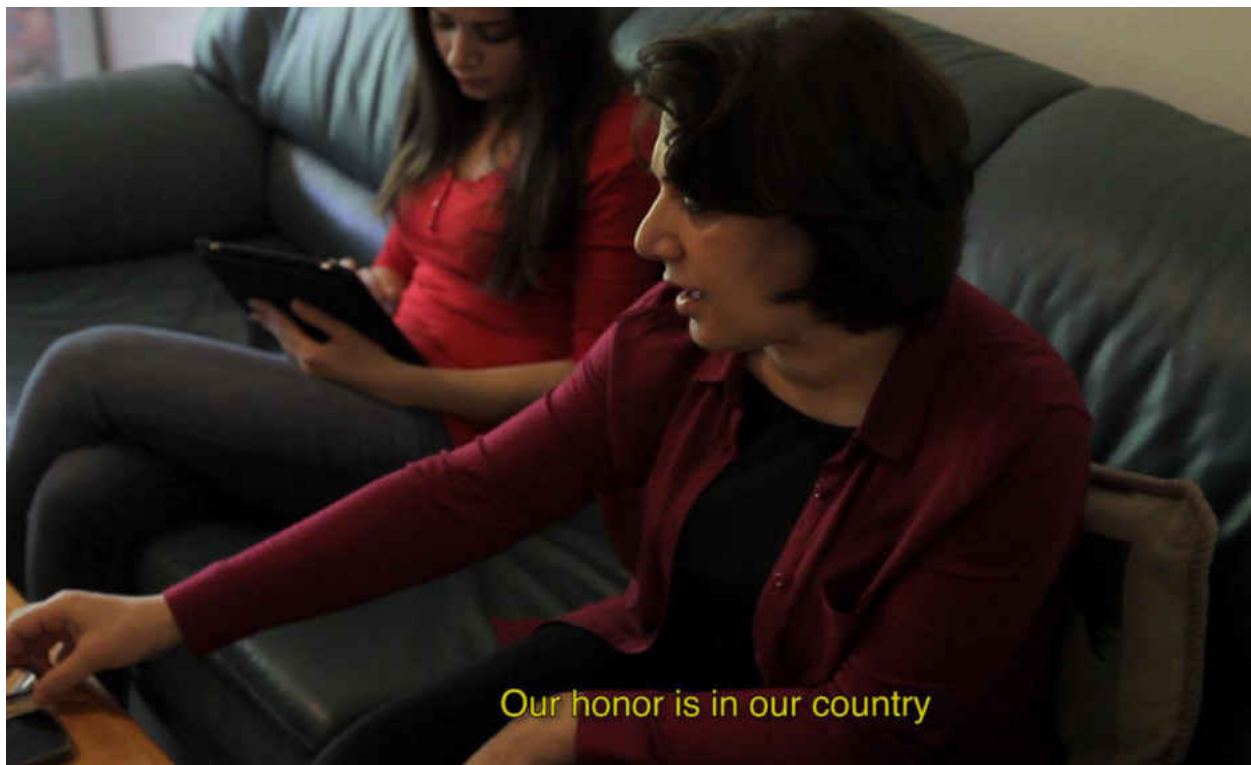


Figure 35:Subtitle Positioning\_2



## 2. Timing and subtitles editing:

Temporal synchronizing between the soundtrack and the subtitle is definitely another significant factor that affects the audience's appreciation of the quality of the film and the translation. In 83 ORANGE PEELS, the accurate timing of subtitling is crucial in order to enforce the cohesion of the visual, audible, and lingual content.

Generally people speak faster than a comfortable reading rate allows. Space and time limitations enforce text reduction. Here comes the necessity not only for a very strong language skills that ensure readability and consistency of text, but also to ensure staying as close as possible to the original wording in order to preserve the meaning of the original dialogue. In other words, cutting text is a necessity to ensure a sufficient reading rate and an accurate meaning.

For example when Salah says:

You know, I felt really hopeless,  
So, like, I wanted to stop my heart.

This should be change to:

I felt hopeless,  
So I wanted to stop my heart.

Ideally, the captions should appear in sync with the audio. Salah speaks quickly, and he interrupts and is being interrupted by his wife. This was a big challenge, especially when it comes to the cutting. The text should appear for an acceptable length of time that allows the viewers to read and comprehend. The guideline for the editing process was editing the “in” and “out” time of the caption to the exact frame of the scene change. I ensured that the appearance of the subtitle is for an acceptable length of time. This time is the time before and after a person is speaking within the scene. Additionally, subtitles should respect the camera cuts, they should disappear before the cuts and captions should be exact same size and shape, as a two-line pyramid or inverted pyramid shape.

In several scenes, we see Salah singing. Subtitling the song lyrics also should follow specific style. According to the CBC guidelines, song lyrics are not italicized, but capitalized and begin with a single music note ♪ placed at the beginning of the caption lyrics and should ended with two music note ♪ ♪. For example Salah sings:

♪ O FLOWERS DO NOT CRY

♪ KEEP SINGING IN HIS ABSENCE

♪ ♪



Figure 36:Subtitling the song lyrics\_1



Figure 37:Subtitling the song lyrics\_2

Another important issue I experienced in post production is identifying the off camera speaker. In the opening scene, I ask Salah about the helicopter sound significance. As I am not obvious to the viewer, it is important to identify who is speaking. According to CBC identifying the off camera speaker and italics his/her subtitles should be done in this case.

For example:

*Filmmaker: What does this sound  
signify to you?*

3. Ellipsis, full stop, abbreviations, and taboo words:

One of the most important code of ethics in translation is to convey and deliver the meaning of the target language without adding or omitting any words for the sake of any political, social, or religious considerations. This film is a stage for Salah to do all that he wants, and live the freedom of expression. Therefore, subtitles should reflect his freedom as well. Taboo words should not be censored. (CBC Captioning Style Guide)

Subtitling is not only delivering a meaning, but also a signal to the viewer. It is the maestro for the mental behavior of the viewer. For instance, using full stops or a period, right after the last character of a subtitle, implies the end of the subtitled sentence. Consequently, the eye goes back to the image since there is no subtitle to expect. When Salah speaks, he pauses for a long time between sentences. In this case, using ellipsis is important to indicate that there is unfinished sentence.

In addition to that, abbreviation usage is not accepted, words should always be spelled out in full. For instance, numbers under ten should be spelled out, time representation also should be written numerically (BBC Subtitle Guidelines).

For example Salah says:

Around 3:00 am or so

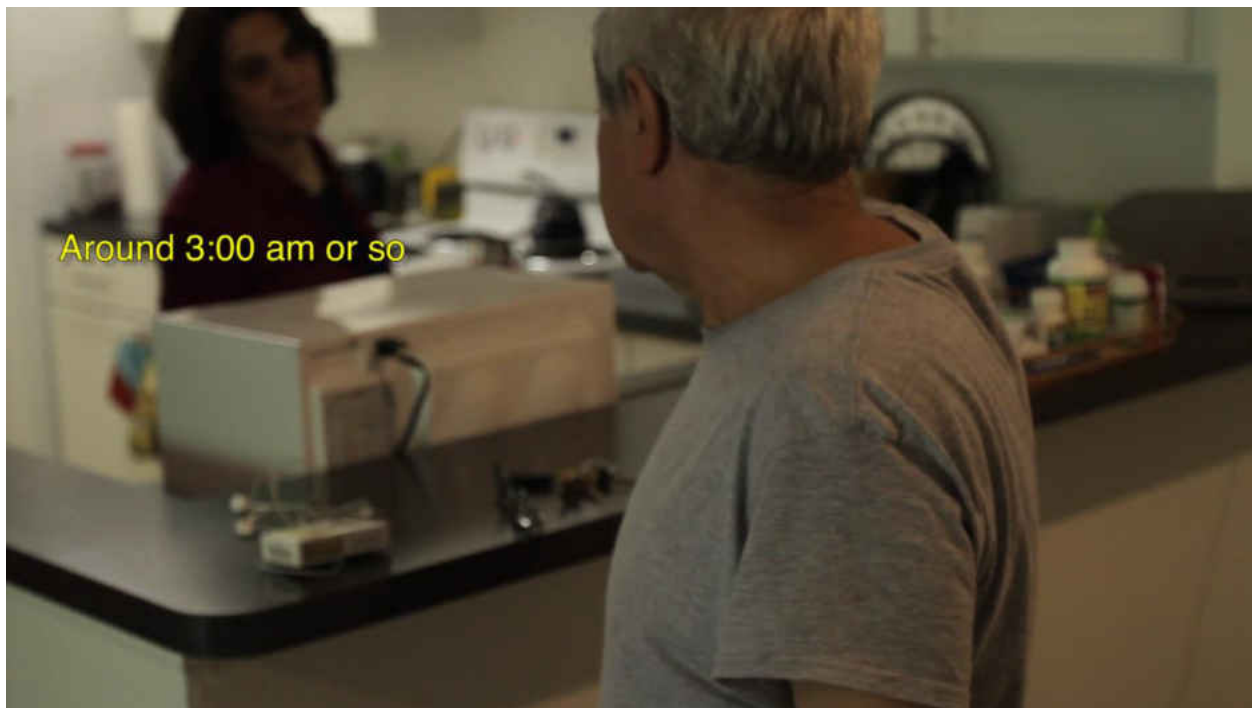


Figure 38:Subtitling Numbers

Another example about abbreviations comes from Amal’s conversation. She repeats the word “OK” in several occasions, in subtitling “OK” should be written as “Okay”, and “ALRIGHT” should be “All RIGHT”.

These are the main post production considerations for the making of this film. 83  
ORANGE PEELS not only explores film as a medium, but also creates its own expressionist and  
free production methodology

In conclusion 83 *ORANGE PEELS* is a film that not only explores film as a medium and  
develops a lyrical cinematic form, but one that creates its own unique and flexible methods of  
production appropriate to the aesthetics value of the form and the meaning of its content.

The healthy understanding of the tools and content can lead to the creation of a new form  
of art in production. In a world of clichés, creativity becomes a necessity and filmmakers are  
more expected to invent their own film production methodology, but only if they make  
themselves a connoisseur with the tools they have. Nowadays, documentary films should not  
only deliver an informational value, but an aesthetic one, and as upcoming filmmakers trying to  
make a name for themselves, they can no longer stick to the conventional methods of production.

## Screening List

Cartel Land. Dir. Matthew Heineman, 2015

Chronicle of a Summer. Dir. Edgar Morin and Jean Rouch. Argos Films, 1961.

Clean, Shaven. Dir. Lodge Kerrigan, 1994

Critical Mass. Dir. Hollis Frampton, 1971.

Dream Is Destiny. Dir. Louis Black and Karen Bernstein, 2016.

Finders Keepers. Dir. Alexander Yellen, 2014.

Gery Gardens. Dir. Albert and David Maysles, 1975.

La Jetee. Dir. Chris Marker. Argos Films, 1962.

Lost Lost Lost. Dir. Jonas Mekas. 1976.

News from Home. Dir. Chantal Akerman. Paradise Films, 1977.

Nostalgia. Dir. Hollis Frampton, 1971.

Roswell. Dir. Bill Brown, 1994

Silvered Water. Dir. Ossama Mohammad, 2014.

Uncle Yanco. Dir. Agnes Varda, 1967.

## References

- "BBC Subtitle Guidelines." BBC Subtitles Guidelines. Web.
- Bharadwaj, Vinita. "Arab Spring Influences Region's Filmmakers." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 2011. Web.
- Block, Bruce. *The Visual Story: Creating the Visual Structure of Film, TV and Digital Media*. 2nd ed. N.p.: Focal, 2007. Print.
- Bresson, R., Griffin, J., & Bresson, R. (1977). *Notes on cinematography*. New York: Urizen Books; [distributed by E. P. Dutton].
- CAREY, MATTHEW. "Workflow: Proper Handling of Your Digital Media." *International Documentary Association*, 2015. Web.
- Carroll, Mary. "Titelbild Subtitling and Translation GmbH." *The LISA Newsletter: Globalization Insider XIII* (2004): n. pag. Web.
- Diaz, Jorge, and Aline Remael. *Translation Practices Explained*. N.p.: St. Jerome, 2007. PDF.
- Euronews. "Syrian Cell Phone War Doc Humbles Cannes." *Euronews*. N.p., 20 May 2014. Web.
- "Editor's Notebook." *FILM 1960*: n. pag. Print.
- Gottlieb Henrik, "Titles on Subtitling 1929–1999," in *Rassegna Italiana di Linguistica Applicata*, vol. 34, nos. 1–2 (2002)
- Ivarsson, Jan. "A Short Technical History of Subtitles in Europe." *Translation and Subtitling Resources*. N.p., Web.
- James, David E. *To Free the Cinema: Jonas Mekas & the New York Underground*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1992. Print.
- Jeffrey, Rouff. "Conventions of Sound in Documentary." *Sound Theory/ Sound Practice*. Ed. Rick Altman. New York: Routledge, Chapman, and Hall, 1992. 217-234.
- Kageyama, Noa. "How Does Music Produce Emotional Reactions?" *The Bulletproof Musician*. 2015. Web.
- Karamitroglou, Fotios. "Subtitling Standards -- A Proposal." *A Proposed Set of Subtitling Standards in Europe 2* (April 1998): n. pag. *Subtitling Standards -- A Proposal*. Web.
- Mitry, Jean. "The Aesthetics and Psychology of the Cinema". Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2000. Print.



- Oncins, Estella. "The Process of Subtitling at Film Festivals: Death in Venice?" "The Process of Subtitling at Film Festivals: Death in Venice?" International Journal of Humanities and Social Science. Web.
- Kim, Nelson. "Charles Burnett." Senses of Cinema. 2003. Web.
- Koresky, Michael. "Eclipse Series 43: Agnès Varda in California." RSS. Web.
- Langkjaer, Birger. "What was Dogme 95?." Film International (16516826) Jan. 2006: 34+. Film & Television Literature Index.
- Malcolm, Derek. "Santiago Alvarez: LBJ." The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, 17 June 1999. Web.
- Moore, Michael. "Michael Moore's 13 Rules for Making Documentary Films." IndieWire. N.p., 2014. Web. 02 Nov. 2016.
- Paul, Jonathan. "Things to Remember When Picking Music for A Documentary Film." The Beat: A Blog by PremiumBeat. N.p., 18 May 2016. Web.
- Price, Thomas. "A Lot of Films at Sundance Festival Edited on Adobe Premiere Pro CC." Cinema5D. N.p., 26 Jan. 2016. Web.
- Oncins, Estella. "The Process of Subtitling at Film Festivals: Death in Venice?" "The Process of Subtitling at Film Festivals: Death in Venice?" 1 03.Special (2013): 70-80. Ijhssnet.com. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science. Web.
- Sarris, Andrew. "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962." Literatureoftheamericas.
- "The CBC Captioning Style Guide" (2003): n. pag. Dcmp.org. Web.
- Trischak, Evamaria. "Dogme 95: The Vow of Chastity (abridged)." Cinetext.philo. N.p., n.d. Web.

### Crew List

1. Director, writer, editor: Klara Hammud
2. Producer: Biddayat
3. Director of Photography: Klara Hammud & Brian Macaione
4. Sound Mixer & Designer: Ermir Bakraci
5. Editor: Klara Hammud & Brian Macaione
6. Music: Rabie Azar
7. Translation: MAG

### Equipment List

1. Nikon D7000 Camera
2. Canon D7
3. Black Magic
4. Shoulder Hand Brace
5. Canon EF 50mm f/1.4 USM Lens
6. Macro lens
7. Portable audio recorder Zoom H4N
8. Boom Poll Holder
9. Stand C
10. Stingers "3,4"
11. Flat TV Screen with HDMI cable

12. PA speakers as "prop"
13. LED Light.
14. Blu-ray player with HDMI cable
15. Flash Memory Cards
16. 2 External Hard Drives/ My Passport Ultra 1TB

#### Location List

1. Salah's House
2. Salah's Hookah Bar
3. Soundstage, Center for Emerging Media, University of Central Florida
4. Downtown Orlando

## CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

### Ethical Filming

My experiences in the making of this film not only introduced me to filmmaking, but also to the codes of ethics of representing others. These codes are different than those of journalism. As documentary films convey impressions, and mount arguments, pitching the style and the modality of the storytelling of 83 ORANGE PEELS arose a lot of questions concerning the ethical issues that might occur during the production. Ethical issues are central to documentary filmmaking especially when it comes to critical subjects such as detention and torture, and their consequences.

83 ORANGE PEELS is not *The Act of Killing* or *The Look of Silence* where the filmmaker unethically prioritized his and neglected his characters' safety. Salah was aware of the film agenda from day one. He was clear about the process and the modality. My crew were introduced to the process of production. Everyone was clear about the mood and the mode.

As 83 ORANGE PEELS is a very personal project for me. I conducted the research and collected the primary materials by myself. I decided to only take the help that I absolutely needed. During the production of the film, there were only three people working on the movie. My sound person and cinematographer shot some of the poetic scenes, while the cameraman and I shot the realistic scenes. As edited the movie by myself. This gave me the chance to immerse myself into the materials and study the relationship between sound, image, and content. My cinematographer was in charge of the color correction because this enabled him to help me create the mood of the film.

Keeping the number of people working on the film down to a minimum, provided me with a few benefits. Firstly, I was able to get to know them and discover their talents and abilities, which in turn helped me bring my artistic vision to reality. Conversely they got to know me and why making this film was so important to me. Secondly, working together so closely, I was able to learn a tremendous amount from them, and reward them in small ways, more special and individualized than I would have been able to had I hired a larger crew.

The small crew size gave way to an intimate atmosphere that helped us get more from Salah and his story. We were at Salah's house as family members rather than a film crew. This made Salah and his wife more open to sharing very personal and crucial moments from the past. I am not certain that would have happened had we had a larger group.

Making this film enabled me to have the courage to state what I felt during the past 30 years of political oppression. Working in the media field restrained me from stating my political views and stances. Making reports was an act that had to be done under censorship, and I was forced to stay on the safe side. Filmmaking opened the venue for me to practice and explore the film as an artistically freeing medium. With a camera in my hand, I met Salah and started to interpret his memories visually and aurally. The film made Salah regain the human value that felt he had lost, when the cause of revolution had vanished, and the revolution was being lost to lies foreign agenda and extremist groups.