



A FILM BY
DEKEL BERENSON

ASHMINA

168 WARDOUR FILMWORKS IN ASSOCIATION WITH BLUE SHADOWS FILMS PRESENTS 'ASHMINA' DIKSHYA KARKI FABIAN GLEESON SADHANA BHANDARI
PRAKAT PAGANI EDITED BY RICARDO MESQUITA SOUND DESIGN BY HUGO LEITAO PRODUCTION DESIGN BY GHANASHYAM SHRESTHRA DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY VASCO VIANA
PRODUCED BY DOMINIC DAVEY MERLIN MERTON AND DEKEL BERENSON EXECUTIVE PRODUCER ELAD KEIDAN WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY DEKEL BERENSON
ASHMINAFILM.COM

BFI LONDON
FILM FESTIVAL
OFFICIAL SELECTION 2018

LOGLINE

In an impoverished country, rife with contradiction, a young girl is torn between her obligation to her family and the influence of foreign visitors.

SYNOPSIS

Nestled between a beautiful lake and the Himalayas, Ashmina, 13, lives with her family at the outskirts of Pokhara Nepal, paragliding capital of the world.

The remote and traditional town is also a busy tourist destination where the locals are profoundly affected by the swarms of tourists who visit it daily. Forced to skip school, Ashmina helps her family make ends meet by working at the landing field, packing the parachutes of foreign pilots in return of small change.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT



Ashmina's story was inspired by a 2014 trip to Nepal. Following a mountain climbing expedition in the Everest region, I travelled to Pokhara to complete my training as a paragliding pilot. I was immediately captivated by the young children who were working in the landing field and instantly knew that I would one day return to Nepal to capture their story on film.

From the very beginning, I envisioned *Ashmina* as a social realist film. It was shot in open locations, using mostly available light and a local semi-professional crew. The cast is made-up of locals, non-professional actors who we met in the location in which the story takes place. The foreigners portraying David and his friends are backpackers who we met in the streets of Pokhara who had to take time off from their travels so they could participate in the film.

Ashmina attempts to authentically capture the world of the protagonist, a young Nepali girl living in a traditional society, a culture which is threatened and challenged by the flood of tourists who visit it daily. The people, places, and atmosphere we've captured in the film are real, and the crew was minimal which allowed us to work inconspicuously and capture the essence of the world around us.

The experience and success of the project have inspired our team to turn *Ashmina* into a full-length feature film. The film will explore episodes in the lives of five women of different ages, from different countries and backgrounds, all facing issues that concern women around the world today.

DEKEL BERENSON

Writer / Director (UK/Israel)

Dekel Berenson is a former strategic start-up consultant turned award winning filmmaker. After completing a mandatory three year service in the Israeli Defence Forces he moved to Budapest to complete a master's degree in International Relations. He then helped numerous companies, taking business ideas from conception to product launch.

In 2011 he went travelling, reaching far away places like the North Pole and Mount Everest. Always a keen observer of human nature and the human condition, Dekel's travels led him to commit his energies and creativity to writing and directing films that examine relationships across boundaries of culture and society.

He returned to London in 2016 to write, direct, and produce his first film, *The Girls Were Doing Nothing*. The film has received critical acclaim and has been screened in more than 50 festivals worldwide.

His second short film, *Ashmina*, was inspired by his travels and will premiere at the 62 BFI London Film Festival,

Dekel is currently working on his first feature film, *Broken Wings*. The film will be made up of five segments, each shot in a different country, and will capture the struggles that women face around the world, regardless of their age, race, or social background.





DOMINIC DAVEY

Producer (UK)

Worked for 10 years as a Live Event Producer specializing in stadium entertainment, before making the switch to film 6 years ago.

In that time he has worked on ten Features and over 50 shorts as a 1st Assistant Director. He currently has numerous projects in development including both short and feature length films.



MERLIN MERTON

Producer (UK)

Started off as a freelance producer on music videos, picking up several UKMVA nominations. In 2013 he founded Blue Shadows Films, a production company renowned for its bold features such as *10,000 Saints* (2015), which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, and *Butterfly Kisses* (2017), winner of the Crystal Bear at the Berlin Film Festival.



ELAD KEIDAN

Executive Producer (Israel)

Studied film at the Jerusalem Film School of Sam Spiegel. *Anthem*, his graduation film, won the Cinéfondation selection in Cannes 2008. Another short, *And On He Walks* participated in the Locarno film festival in 2011. His first feature *Afterthought* took part in the Cannes Official Selection in 2015 and won several awards back home. Lives in Tel Aviv where he teaches, lectures and gives story tutoring to film students and professionals.





DIKSHYA KARKI

(Nepal)

It is always our preference to work with real people, non-professional actors who are discovered in the location in which the story takes place. Their performance add a layer of authenticity to the film which is difficult to achieve while working with established actors. This is doubly important when working with children or young adults.

Dikshya Karki, 13, is a native of Pokhara and a student at a local school. Following a lengthy casting process, she was selected for the role from among dozens of other girls. Dikshya then undertook extensive training as a “packing girl,” spending more than six weeks at the local landing field, learning the ins and outs of folding parachutes.

The local packers, at the time of shooting exclusively boys, were at first suspicious of Dikshya but quickly adopted her as one of their own. She became so good at packing paragliders that within days she was being paid for the job by pilots who did not know that she was there for the role.



FABIAN GLEESON

David (Australia)

Born in Geelong Australia in 1986. From 2004 - 2017 worked as a carpenter. At age 18 began to paraglide but stopped in 2007 after a near death experience. Started paragliding again in 2016 and is now training acrobatics and flying different locations around the world. Heard about Ashmina from a Facebook post and decided to audition for the role. Hobbies also include skateboarding and electronic music production.



SADHANA BHANDARI

Ashmina's Mother (Nepal)

Born in Nuwakot, Sadhana moved to Kathmandu in 2004 to pursue a career as a Nurse and Midwife. Between 2006 and 2012 worked for international NGOs as a team leader and paramedical staff treating HIV patients, women and children, as well as infected drug users. Began taking acting lessons in 2013 and since then have been involved in the Kathmandu independent theatre and film scenes. Her hobbies include singing, dancing and travelling.



PRAKAT PAGENI "SHIVA"

Ashmina's Father - (Nepal)

Born in Deurali, a small village in the Northern-Central Nepal, Shiva is a teacher, writer and poet. He recorded more than 45 songs and published his first book of poems in 1999. He has been involved with a number of Nepali family planning organizations and is currently teaches literature and drama at the Global Public School in Kathmandu and at local public schools in Pokhara.

BROKEN WINGS

FIVE WOMEN, FIVE COUNTRIES, ONE STORY

A FILM BY DEKEL BERENSON



BROKEN WINGS

(working title)

Inspired by the experience in Nepal and building on the success of *Ashmina*, the team has decided to expand the project into a full-length feature.

The film, *Broken Wings*, will draw inspiration from the director's experiences, gained while he was travelling around the world between 2011-2015, and will be made of five different parts, each shot in a different country - Ukraine, Israel, Brazil & South Africa. The film's fifth and final part will take place on a cruise ship, at sea.



Each part will tell the story of a different woman who lives in a different country, and each of the parts will be unique and unrelated to the other. When put together the five stories will create not only a colourful tapestry portraying our global community but a whole which is greater than the sum of its parts, a contemporary frieze, one that captures the struggles that women face around the world today, regardless of their age, race, or social background.

While each segment represents part of a bigger whole, one which is united by a single vision, each segment will take a slightly different stylistic approach, taking into account the particularities of each specific story and location.

LOCATIONS & TIMING

Each segment will be shot in a different country - **Ukraine, Israel, Brazil & South Africa**. The final segment takes place on a cruise ship, at sea.

- January 2019**  The film's first segment will be shot in **January 2019 in Kiev, Ukraine.**
- May 2019**  The film's second segment will be shot in **May 2019 in Tel Aviv, Israel.**
- Late 2019**  The film's third segment will be shot in **late 2019 in Brasil.**
- Early 2020**  The film's fourth segment will be shot in **early 2020 in South Africa.**
- Mid 2020**  The film's final segment will be shot in **mid 2020, on a cruise ship, at sea.**



Broken Wings will be shot in multiple countries and is co-produced with award winning local producers. The production of the film's 1st and 2nd segments is underway. The film's first segment will be shot in January 2019, in Kiev, Ukraine.



DENNIS IVANOV

Co-Producer (Ukraine)

The film's first segment - *Anna* - will be shot in January 2019 in Ukraine. It will be produced by Dennis Ivanov and Arthouse Traffic, the first Ukrainian film company that specializes in distribution and production of art cinema. Arthouse Traffic co-produced *The Tribe* by Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy, which won 3 awards at the 2014 Cannes Film Festival and *Donbass*, which was selected as the opening film in the Un Certain Regard section in 2018. At Cannes, Loznitsa won the Un Certain Regard Award for Best Director.



FESTIVAL DE CANNES



ADAR SHAFRAN

Co-Producer (Israel)

The film's second segment - *Adva* - will be shot in 2019 in Israel. Adar is the owner and primary producer at Firma Films which produces award-winning feature films. In 2016 he was an associate producer on *Through the Wall*, which won 3 Israeli Academy Awards and was screened at the Venice Film Festival. In 2017 he produced *Maktub*, which screened at the Chicago & Palm Springs Film Festivals and is the highest grossing Israeli film in the last 30 years.



MARTA PARLATORE

Project Consultant (Netherlands)

Born in Bologna with Polish-Italian roots. Graduated from the Film Directing department of the Polish film school in Łódź, where she wrote and directed several shorts. Her shorts *Kardiofemia*, *Alice's Land* and *Seven Days* were received awards at distinguished European festivals such as Cannes Alumni of institutions such as the Résidence of the Cinéfondation (7th session), the Screenwriter's and Director's programmes of the Binger FilmLab, and the Torino Film Lab.



FESTIVAL DE CANNES



DIRECTOR'S VISION

Filmmaking is neither spontaneous nor mechanical. It is the sum result of a highly concentrated effort by a large number of people, all directed by a particular vision in which every detail, from character design and story pacing to editing style and camera movement, is meticulously pre-planned in order to create a profoundly rich and significant audio-visual experience. It is the careful selection and crafting of a small number of scenes, spanning only a couple of hours, which could contain within them a lifetime of events.

Stylistically I'm interested in poetic social realism, films which are both highly authentic, yet lyrical, in a way that is organic and does not call attention to itself. A good example and influence is Andrea Arnold and her films *Fish Tank* and *American Honey*. The first is a fiercely honest depiction of the British working-class, among tower blocks and council estates. The second, an equally compelling story following the lives of poor teens crisscrossing the South, juxtaposing both ends of American society. Both films make perfect use of cinematic imagery to contradict the ugly reality with the simplicity and beauty of nature.

In a similar fashion, and following the style outlined in *Ashmina*, I envision *Broken Wings* as both extremely realistic, raw and natural, yet rich in allegorical, metaphorical and symbolic details. Actions speak louder than words, and it is by following our hero's stories and choices that we discover their real character and life circumstances.

When it comes to style - restraint, moderation, and self-control are key. Cliché is the enemy of good art, as well as “on the nose” spoon-feeding the audience with story information or too obvious symbolism. A good story is not told but shown; and the best stories are not simply shown but are formed in the combination of seemingly unrelated elements, with meaning created in their union as in the marriage between seed and water: “For sale: baby shoes, never worn.”

CAST & CREW

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY - **DEKEL BERENSON**
PRODUCED BY - **DEKEL BERENSON, MERLIN MERTON, DOMINIC DAVEY**
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER - **ELAD KEIDAN**
CINEMATOGRAPHY BY - **VASCO VIANA**
LOCAL 1ST AD - **PRASHISH BAJRACHARYA**
GAFFER - **DIPENDRA THAPALIYA**
ART DIRECTOR - **GHANASHYAM SHRESTHRA**
COSTUME - **MADAN NEUPANE**
MAKE UP - **SAROJ BUDHATHOKI**
POST PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR - **CHARLOTTE STADE**
EDITOR - **RICARDO MESQUITA**
SOUND RECORDIST - **MIGUEL ANTUNES**
SOUND EDITOR - **HUGO LEITAO**
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT - **TOM CULLINGHAM**

TECHNICAL DETAILS:

Running Time: **15' 30**
Aspect Ratio: **1:2.39**
Screening Format: **2K DCP, .mov, mp4 (HD)**
Sound: **5.1 Stereo**
Shot on **Red Helium, 8K, 25 fps**

ASHMINA - **DIKSHY KARKI**
DAVID - **FABIAN GLEESON**
MOTHER - **SADHANA BHANDARI**
FATHER - **PRAKAT PAGENI**
BROTHER - **SACHIN RAGME**
DAVID'S FRIEND I - **SEBASTIAN SEITZ**
DAVID'S FRIEND II - **RAMONA SWHAJOR**
DAVID'S FRIEND III - **CHARLOTTE STADE**
TOURIST - **DOMINIC DAVEY**
CLERK - **SHYAM KHADKA**

**BUDDHI PARAJULI, SUBASH THAPA JONNY, PREM KHATRI
CHHETRI, BISHAL BADHUR CHHETRI, BIKRAM NEPALI, NORM
DIBBLE, PURSU RAM SIGDEL, KERAN NEPALI, SUNIL NEPA-
LI, SUDIP NEPALI, SAROJ BHUJEL, SUBASH PANIYAR, RAMESH
NEPALI, BIKASH NEPALI, SUJAN SHRESTHA, MANON DEPREM,
CHRISTOPHER KNOCH, SUJAN THAPA MAYAR, NABIN PARIYAR,
SANJU PARIYAR, SANDEEP NEPALI.**

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and the people of Pokhara who helped in the making of the film.

ARTHOUSE
TRAFFIC



Wardour FilmWorks

BLUE SHADOWS FILM

FIRMA

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